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ABSTRACT

This report is the second part of a study which sought to determine whether there is a set of in-school factors which might help explain the differences in dropout rates among schools with very similar student bodies. The study was designed as an in-depth ethnographic examination of four pairs of Chicago (Illinois) public high schools. One school in each pair had a high dropout rate and the other had a lower rate. Part I of the study discussed methodology and findings. Part II describes each school in the study. The following information is provided about each school: (1) school and community environment; (2) student body characteristics; (3) faculty and staff characteristics; (4) administrative style; and (5) school policies on curriculum, failure and promotion, faculty, extracurricular activities, attendance, discipline, and special programs. (PS)

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CHICAGO PANEL
ON PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY AND FINANCE

"WHERE'S ROOM 185?"
HOW SCHOOLS CAN REDUCE THEIR DROPOUT PROBLEM

PART II

An Ethnographic Investigation of
Four Matched Pairs of Urban High Schools

G. Alfred Hess, Jr.
Executive Director

Emily Wells
Carol Prindle
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Beatrice Kaplan
Ethnographers

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Lastly, we thank the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, which also underwrote the Panel's original dropout study, for making this research effort possible. For the Fry Foundation's continuing concern for dropout reduction, and for the advice and encouragement of its director Ben Rothblatt, the Panel is deeply appreciative.

The Panel offers its sincere thanks to each of these individuals or groups.

"Where's Room 185?" is an on-site study of eight Chicago high schools. Researchers spent a month in each school looking for important differences which might affect the dropout rate. The schools were matched in four pairs, each school in a pair enrolling similar students but with significantly different dropout rates. The study was an effort to determine why one school in a pair had a lower rate than the other. In addition to extensive observation, researchers interviewed a random sample of teachers and students.

In order to avoid intruding on students' learning time, the investigators sought to interview them during their study halls or lunch periods. In one school, the ethnographer found many students were assigned study hall in Room 185, but he could never find the room. Students in that school had learned that being assigned a study hall in Room 185 meant they were not expected to attend school during that period. Room 185 was a computer scheduler's fiction, used most frequently for a student's first or last period of the day. Thus, the question "Where's Room 185?" became symbolic, to the reasearch team, of the school practices which shortchange Chicago students and probably contribute to the dropout problem. This study, based on eight months of school observation, looks at things schools can do to reduce their dropout rates.

"WHERE'S ROOM 185?"
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forty-three percent of all entering high school students in Chicago drop out before graduation. In *Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools*, a study conducted by the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance and released in May, 1985, the Panel established that the two most important factors contributing to the dropout rate were below normal reading scores and overage freshmen. The dropout rate in the system's 63 high schools closely reflects the percentage of entering freshmen reading below normal and/or the percentage overage. Individual school dropout rates varied from 11% to 63%. Thus, the level of preparation of elementary school graduates was the largest factor correlating with school dropout rates.

However, dropout rates differed significantly among schools with similar student enrollments. Schools with almost identical student characteristics, including similar reading scores and percentage of overage freshmen, often had very different overall dropout rates. Further analysis of the data showed that statistically significant differences in the dropout rate did exist among pairs of schools which had been matched on reading scores, percentage of overage students, an index of poverty and racial and ethnic composition.

To determine whether there was a set of in-school factors which might help to explain the differences in dropout rates among schools with very similar student bodies, the present study was designed as an in-depth ethnographic examination of four pairs of Chicago public high schools. Each pair had similar student enrollments. Students at one pair (DuSable and Collins) were mainly inner city Blacks; at another (Wells and Bowen) they were predominantly inner-city Hispanics. At the third pair (Hubbard and Washington), the students had been predominantly White. Two vocational high schools (Simeon and Westinghouse), which selected the best prepared inner-city black students were selected as the final pair. Dropout rates varied from eight to seventeen percentage points between paired schools. While these differences are significant, they are far from the whole of the dropout problem. If the differences could be overcome, a number of potential dropouts would graduate, but the dropout rates at the four inner-city neighborhood schools would still be unacceptably high.

The overall goal was to determine whether the schools with the lower dropout rate in each pair differed in consistent ways from the schools with the higher dropout rates. The hypotheses guiding the study were drawn from a body of research known as "the effective schools literature." A number of studies conducted primarily among black, urban inner city elementary schools found that students performed better in schools under the leadership of a strong principal who set well-defined goals and priorities for teachers and students, schools in which an atmosphere of discipline and order prevailed, and in which students were expected to learn and were not allowed to fail. The study was looking for variations in factors which could be controlled by school officials.

Although the present study was conducted in high schools, it was anticipated that the important factors identified in elementary school research might also distinguish the lower dropout rate schools from the higher. It was expected that the schools with the lower dropout rates in each pair would have principals who exerted stronger leadership, a more disciplined and orderly atmosphere, better attendance, lower failure rates, and teachers who expected more of students.

In order to investigate so many complex and interwoven factors, an ethnographic study was designed in which a researcher spent an extended period of time in participant observation in each matched pair of schools. The study included formal questionnaires administered to a sample of students, teachers and administrators, structured classroom observations, and informal observation in the schools. This data was supplemented when possible by statistical data provided by the Chicago Board of Education and the schools.

The study found six major characteristics that distinguished the lower dropout rate schools from the higher dropout rate schools in each pair. These included: *1) stronger leadership from the principal and his or her administrative team, 2) more order and discipline in the halls, lunchrooms and other common areas of the school, 3)better student attendance, 4) lower failure rates, 5) more active instruction and less seatwork in the classroom, and 6) more interaction between teachers and students in class.* In addition to these factors which distinguished schools with lower dropout rates, the study also found factors in all schools which might contribute to a high student dropout rate. For example, most students received less than the 300 instructional minutes a day in class time mandated by state law. A culture of cutting prevailed among students, and in some schools student attendance was poorly monitored by administrators. Individual attention to each student averaged only a few minutes a day, and teachers complained of "burnout." Finally, although gangs compete with schools for the loyalty of students, at most schools they offered a quiet presence rather than an active disruption of activities.

As a result of this study, the Panel believes that there are steps which can be taken in individual high schools to reduce the dropout rate. These steps are not the full cure to this problem, for they do not address the level of unpreparedness at which students are leaving the system's elementary schools. However, they are concrete things which can be done to reduce the number of students at each school who leave before graduation. Therefore, the Panel recommends 1) that instructional time be increased by shifting to 50 minute periods, 2) that study halls be restructured to eliminate their use for gap filling, 3) that the school system mount an attack on the existing "culture of cutting," 4) that counseling services be reorganized and expanded, 5) that principals focus attention on establishing orderliness, both in student discipline and in building maintenance, and 6) that school staffs focus on improving attendance and reducing failure rates.

NEAL F. SIMEON VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

AND

GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

NEAL F. SIMEON VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

I. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

In 1963 Wescott Vocational High School moved to a new site at 8235 Vincennes Avenue on Chicago's South Side. The warehouse building was donated by the Kroger Company. The school was initially housed on the third floor while renovation of the remainder of the building was underway. It was renamed Simeon Vocational High School in 1965, after the vocational education specialist Neal F. Simeon who died in 1963. Renovation was completed in 1966, enabling the school to occupy all three floors of the building. In the several years following a flood in 1975, which destroyed the gym floor, further remodeling and decoration were carried out in the building. The present gymnasium facilities, however, remain grossly inadequate; a new gymnasium complex with a swimming pool is scheduled for construction this summer.

Simeon High School is located in a mixed neighborhood of small single family houses, small businesses and industrial buildings. Ryerson Steel and a soft drink bottling company are located less than a block from the school. According to a report which school staff prepared for the NCA Evaluation this spring, a number of small businesses, including some shopping centers and fast food restaurants, have opened in the area in recent years. These employ a number of Simeon students.

The school is easily accessible by public transportation. Most students live in the near South Side communities of Englewood, West Englewood, Auburn-Gresham and Washington Heights. A few also come from Beverly, Greater Grand Central and New City. On a survey conducted by school staff for the NCA report, 39% of the students reported living one and a half to three and a half miles from the school, 20% lived closer than a mile and a half, and another 20% lived between three and a half and six miles away.

Although one of Simeon's basketball players was tragically killed by a member of a gang near the school in the fall of 1984, most students and teachers stated that gangs were not a problem in the school or the immediate vicinity. A park behind the school where youths would congregate in good weather was deemed somewhat dangerous for students before closed campus was instituted in the spring of 1986.

Simeon Vocational High School is set immediately on Vincennes Avenue with no lawn between the sidewalk and the school. It looks more like the warehouse it was built to be than a school. On the north side is a large fenced parking lot, locked between 9:30 and 2:00, which is more than adequate for faculty and student parking. In the rear of the school is the gym building which is also attached to the main building by tunnel, and two mobile units for health classes. A smaller one story building attached to the main building houses the auto and auto body shops, the welding shop and the machine shop.

Although the building had been remodeled and renovated, the facility was still judged by most faculty and staff and some students to be inadequate. Frequently mentioned shortcomings were the lack of athletic facilities for Simeon's strong teams, a leaky roof and poor heating and ventilation controls.

This year approximately 200 more Freshmen enrolled than had been planned for, putting a strain on the school's facilities. Because of this, several windowless classrooms with very poor acoustics had to be utilized. In order to accommodate all of the students the school runs on a split shift system; students and faculty begin either first, second or third period and finish the day after ninth, tenth or eleventh period respectively.

The three story main building contains approximately 40 classrooms as well as shops for sheet metal, carpentry, electronics, commercial art, graphic arts, cosmetology and printing. There are not enough rooms for the academic teachers to have classrooms of their own. Most teach in at least two different rooms. Perhaps because classrooms were shared individual teachers seemed to take less responsibility in maintaining attractive bulletin board displays and keeping desktops clean. There was considerable change between the beginning and end of the study, however. By the third week of observations the ethnographer noticed that in almost every classroom bulletin boards had been decorated with borders of construction paper and displays of student work in readiness for the North Central Evaluation team which visited the school April 2-4, 1986.

Just inside the front entrance is the main office complex containing the reception area with teacher sign-in sheets and boxes, several small offices for clerks, duplicating machines and one of the assistant principals' office. The area provides a small and somewhat cramped area for the number of staff working there. The principal's office, a larger, more spacious room, opens off of the complex of small offices.

The counseling office is to the north of the front entrance. A small waiting and reception area is separated from a row of small cubicles with doors which serve as the counselors'offices by a counter staffed by two clerks . Special education classes and students being tutored meet in a larger open area behind a center wall. Students meeting with counselors are not afforded a great deal of privacy under these conditions, and the special education classes were often noisy. Holding these tutoring sessions elsewhere would make the atmosphere in the counseling center less chaotic.

Also located prominently on the first floor of the building are the lunchroom, social room, library and two cosmetology classrooms. The library is a large, sunny room. Its carpeted floor, new-looking tables and chairs and stacks placed off to the side, as well as its neat and organized appearance makes it one of the most pleasant places to work in the school. In addition, the three library staff members are very strict in controlling talking and other disruptive behavior.

The lunchroom, although large, appeared overcrowded during lunch periods. Lines which formed in the front hall were often long, and students tended to mill around in the hall outside of the lunchroom. The degree of noise and disorder were in part a consequence of the newly instituted closed campus, as students and staff had not completely adjusted to the new system. Breakfast was served through second period; lunch periods were fourth through seventh. The lunch room was used during the rest of the day as a place for study halls. During some periods, four or five teachers were assigned study hall together in the lunch room. All of these factors combined to make the lunchroom one of the noisiest, dirtiest and most disorderly areas in the school. Very few of the students carried their trays from the table, leaving the lunchroom staff no time to clean up the area before study hall students arrived. Students in afternoon study halls were forced to sit at sticky tables and walk on floors layered with food and paper trash. The students' dislike for the closed campus system and the frequent food fights no doubt increased the mess and chaos in the lunch room. A faculty lunchroom adjoined the students' lunchroom, but no faculty members were assigned lunchroom duty with the students. Instead, whenever a food fight erupted, six or eight faculty members would leap to their feet to break it up.

Tucked away in the southwest corner are the discipline, programming and attendance offices, all of which are quite small. The discipline office is also the office of the assistant principal in charge of discipline.

The second floor contains five shops, three science labs, one large study hall room and a row of classrooms. The classrooms are used by the history and math departments. A row of small jerry-built rooms running down the center of the large spacious hall serve as offices for the English, math and history departments. Inside the offices desks pushed together in the center, steel cabinets and a few small tables around the periphery provide the work space for the academic teachers during their preparation periods.

The third floor is in the worst repair. It was also the area first used as a school while the rest of the building was being renovated. The most undesirable classrooms are located on this floor. Three of these have no windows; air circulation is bad; and the acoustics make it almost impossible for students sitting in the back half of the room to hear the teacher. The business and data processing departments are located on this floor. A row of classrooms along the front of the building is used for English and business classes.

Faculty and staff rated the school as very safe. Fifteen of twenty teachers stated that inside the building was always or almost always safe; three said it was sometimes safe. Thirteen students thought the school was always safe; the other seven thought it was sometimes safe. The building engineer and a few of the staff pointed out that the stairwells were too narrow for safety and that they provided too many nooks and crannies in which students cutting class could hide out. Two teachers felt that the third floor was not safe after ninth period when the hall monitors and most of the teachers had left.

II. STUDENT BODY

There were 2,017 students enrolled at Simeon in March of 1986, up from an enrollment ranging around 1,825 or 1,850 between 1981 and 1984. Only in 1980 did enrollment surpass 2,000. This year nearly 200 more Freshmen than expected enrolled, leading to some overcrowding, the hiring of a number of new teachers and a general strain on facilities. During the current year there were 700 Freshmen, 553 Sophomores, 459 Juniors and 305 Seniors attending Simeon.

The student body is 100% Black. Approximately equal numbers of boys and girls attend, although in the Freshman class there were more boys than girls, while in the Senior class there were a few more girls than boys. Approximately 50% (1,101 of 2,062) were classified as low income students in the Public School Fall Enrollment and Housing Report.

Since Simeon is a vocational rather than a general high school, it recruits students over a wider geographical area and is selective in its entrance requirements. According to administrators, students must have a score of 7.5 on the seventh grade reading test. Exceptions were made, however, for some students with learning disabilities, for potential athletes and for children with siblings who have attended Simeon. Ten of the twenty students interviewed had siblings currently attending or who had attended Simeon.

Except for this year's Freshmen, who scored in the 40th percentile, Simeon students' scores in English on the TAP tests have ranged around the 29th to 35th percentiles in every grade. There has been an increase in the scores of ninth graders since 1982. Math scores on the TAP tests have varied between the 28th and 34th percentiles. The Freshman class in 1985 scored in the 35th percentile.

Although jeans and tee shirts could be seen at Simeon, students in general dressed well. Boys wore slacks, shirts and sweaters; girls often wore stylish blouse and slack outfits and occasionally skirts or dresses. Hats and earrings for boys and other gang insignia were not permitted in the school. While 11 of the 20 students interviewed stated that gang members did attend Simeon, ten of those students said their presence made no difference.

Simeon students were characterized by staff as "nice kids." A number of teachers felt that the school attracted those students who were quiet and who were seeking a safe atmosphere in which to attend school. Although the school was perceived as a safe place by both staff and students, it was not always orderly and quiet. The noise level in the halls between classes was very high, especially in areas near the stairways, and the noise did not cease immediately when the bell for class rang. Particularly on the second and third floors students sauntered leisurely to their classes or remained in the hall chatting for a few minutes after the bell had rung. One hall monitor and several teachers told the ethnographer that they did not even bother to take their posts in the halls until several minutes after the bell for classes had rung, since there were "too many students out then to fight with." Further, teachers were not allowed to lock out tardy students. As a consequence, in only a few classes, where teachers strictly enforced discipline and tardiness rules, did the class actually begin on time. In addition, however, almost all students interviewed said they had cut class at least once. Teachers complained that there were too many corners and places where students could hang out while they were cutting class. One teacher told the ethnographer that she sometimes roamed the halls rounding up class cutters; very few teachers were this diligent, however.

A number of teachers criticized the enforcement of discipline policies at Simeon as being lax or inconsistent. While five of 20 teachers interviewed stated the principal was a stern disciplinarian, eight said he was moderate to lax, and six characterized him as inconsistent. According to one of the shop teachers, discipline used to be much worse at a time when the school was dominated by gang members. Then a few of the shop teachers banded together and started enforcing rules with a resulting improvement in student discipline. Discipline problems were handled by the assistant principal in charge of discipline. Most teachers described him as a moderate to strong disciplinarian. Said one teacher, "He is very effective, very strict; without him the school would be hurting." A few teachers complained of the arbitrariness of the punishments meted out by the discipline officer.

The lunchroom was the one area in which student discipline was most lacking. Because of the newly instituted closed campus rule, students were not allowed to leave the building during school hours, and were required to spend their lunch periods either in the lunchroom or in the library. Since the librarians enforced rules for quiet and order very strictly, most students were forced into the lunchroom. With no faculty supervision food fights broke out a number of times while the ethnographer was there.

The curriculum at Simeon, aside from the required academic subjects, provided for a series of two period, ten week mini-shops for Freshmen and Sophomores. Thus, during the first two years a student sampled eight different shops before selecting a vocational major at the end of the sophomore year. Except for business majors, juniors and seniors took a four period shop in their vocational majors. Business students could take courses in one of several business tracks.

Cosmetology students had to declare their majors at the end of the freshman year, since state licensing requires a certain number of class hours.

Students generally spent seven periods in class and one period at lunch. Some students had a study hall and some took an additional class as an elective. Study halls were generally seen as holding pens for students who could not be programmed straight through due to scheduling difficulties.

Although Simeon is a vocational school, most teachers reported that a significant proportion of their students plan to go to college or at least to acquire additional training. Business and data processing were majors most frequently chosen by students who aspired to go to college. Nine of the 20 interviewed students said they wanted to go to college after they graduated; four others were considering either college or the military. Only three said they planned to get a job instead of continuing their educations.

When asked what they thought was special about the school, ten students answered "the people," designating either the students or teachers in general, or naming specific faculty members. Nine mentioned the athletic program.

III. FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty of 106 members was 31% white and 68% black. Approximately 50% were male and 50% female. In addition to 91 teachers, the staff includes the principal, two assistant principals and one assistant principal designate, one programmer, four guidance counselors, three special education teachers, two librarians and an assistant librarian.

According to the report prepared for the NCA Evaluation, 72% ofthe teachers had taught at Simeon for at least five years. Eighty-six percent were tenured. Of the twenty teachers interviewed, 12 had been at Simeon over ten years. Five of the 20 had taught betwen one and three years in the school. According to the administration a number of new teachers had to be brought in this year due to the larger than expected Freshman enrollment.

Because there is no central teacher lounge at Simeon, the academic teachers generally spent their preparation periods in their departmental offices. Although some socializing went on during these periods, most teachers devoted their time to grading papers and preparing for classes. The small, cramped offices were not very conducive to socializing. In addition, anything said was easily overheard in the halls. Much of the socializing took place in the faculty lunchroom, where the same small groups of teachers were seen sitting together every day.

Although there was racial segregation during lunch, none of the teachers during interviews expressed any feeling that anyone was given preferential treatment based on race. Eleven of the 20 teachers interviewed said they had friends in the school with whom they socialized outside of school. Several staff referred to the school as "a big family." Indeed, there did appear to be a feeling of community among the teachers. Most lived on the South Side; a reason often given for liking the school was that it was close to home. Seven teachers thought teacher morale was good to excellent, seven thought it was average, while five felt it was poor or average to poor.

Academic teachers were scheduled for nine consecutive periods at school including one lunch period, one or two counseling and preparation periods, five classes and one or two periods performing another duty. The most common duties included hall duty, working with scheduling in the programming office, supervising a study hall, and working in the attendance office. The administration relied quite heavily on teachers to keep the attendance records and organize the scheduling. Teachers and aides in the data processing department assisted in storing much of this data on computers. Many of the vocational shop teachers taught shop for eight periods a day: one four period junior and senior shop and two two period mini-shops. Academic departmental chairs taught four instead of five classes.

Although teachers in their interviews were often critical of the school and the administration, the atmosphere was not one of an on-going battle between faculty and administration. In fact, when asked if there had been any major conflicts or disagreements between a teacher and the principal, twelve answered either "no" or "I don't know." Teachers in the English department, in particular, voiced the complaint that they received too little support and recognition from the administration. English was perceived to be "the orphan department." The most frequent teacher complaints involved the lack of discipline in the halls, students coming to class tardy and the administration asking teachers to cover the classes of absent teachers. Teacher absenteeism was sometimes high at the school. On one day 25% were absent; on another 14% were out. When the administration was unable to get enough substitutes, teachers were paged over the intercom and asked to report to the office (to take over a class).

IV. ADMINISTRATION

A principal and two assistant principals headed up Simeon. In addition a third assistant principal had been designated at the time of the study; Board approval was expected for the Fall of 1986. According to the principal, the school had formerly had three assistant principals, but one position had been cut by the Board, leaving the school short-handed. The administration was rounded out by the programming and attendance offices. The full-time programmer, a former math teacher at the school, was assisted by several teachers during their duty periods. The attendance office was staffed by one of the coaches and a teacher for part of the day. The principal complained that "the Board continually asks you to do more with less." Specifically, he criticized school officials for expecting the schools to institute new programs without providing them with additional staff. For example, he said, "The Board doesn't give you a programmer -- you create and manipulate a position by freeing up a teacher." At Simeon a number of teachers performed various administrative functions with or even without reductions in their class loads.

Considerable time was put into maintaining student records . Beyond grades, school attendance figures and other information required by the Board, careful records were kept by the attendance and discipline offices on each student having dealings with either office. Attendance data was entered into the school's computers with the assistance of an aide and students in the data processing department, enabling the school to keep a cummulative record of attendance on each student. This information was distributed in a daily attendance bulletin. Students with unexcused absences of three or more days appeared on a "barred list." In summary, a great deal of information was maintained systematically on students by the school. The only complaint by teachers was that the attendance data was not always distributed on the same day it was collected, making it less useful to them. In addition, staff sometimes were asked to undertake large special projects such as the report prepared during the course of 1985-86 for the North Central Association's evaluation of the school. Several teachers complained of too much "needless paperwork."

The principal at Simeon was a friendly, pleasant man. He looked upon the staff and students at the school as "one big family." This sentiment was echoed by a number of the teachers and students in interviews. Working with students and "seeing them become responsible adults" was the most rewarding aspect of his job, according to the principal. However, he stated that most of his time was taken up with administrative paperwork; some time was spent talking with parents; while only "a bit" of time could be devoted to observing teachers. Although he was usually working at his desk, his office door was always open. Espousing a broad but diffuse philosophy of "treating people fairly" and creating an atmosphere such that "students want to come and teachers don't want to leave," the principal set general rather than specific goals for the school. He viewed Simeon as a school where the average student can come and succeed.

Of the 20 teachers interviewed, 16 characaterized their working relationship with the principal as friendly and formal. Two stated that they enjoyed a friendly and informal working relationhip. Only one teacher reported a strained working relationship with the principal. Teachers stated that the principal visited their classrooms to evaluate their teaching and checked their lesson plans once a year. According to eight teachers, one of the assistant principals also evaluated teaching. Four teachers remembered receiving constructive criticism from the principal; four others said that general tips on improving teaching were distributed in memos to teachers.

Because of the relatively large number of staff and teachers available during duty periods to perform administrative tasks, the principal was able to delegate considerable day to day work to staff. Indeed, 15 of the 20 teachers interviewed characterized the management style of the principal as "delegates authority." Six also stated that he "makes decisions from the top down" or "maintains control in his own hands." Four thought he "solicits staff opinions but ultimately makes the decisions." In addition, five teachers offered their own evaluations of his management style, including "He forms committees to make decisions;" He is wishy-washy;" and "He is concerned about his superiors and making the wrong judgment."

One of the assistant principals took charge of teacher affairs and many of the everyday details of running the school. He obtained substitutes when necessary, sent out general notices and reminders to teachers, and assisted with teacher evaluation. The other assistant principal headed the discipline office.

V. SIMEON SCHOOL POLICIES

A. CURRICULUM

Simeon has a printed curriculum guide for students, parents and teachers to insure the curriculum and options for programs are understood by all. In addition, both the counseling and program offices have forms for the selection of major and special courses which students and parents must fill out and sign each year. Since the different vocational majors require varying numbers of credits for graduation, (i.e. from 18 for auto body or cosmetology to 20.5 for secretarial practice or data processing), the required and suggested courses for each vocational major for each year Freshman through Senior are listed. Students have some choices in courses, particularly for the "enrichment courses" such as chorus and chemistry. Freshmen may choose the mini-shop program, home economics or typing (for the data processing major) and either drafting, art or music. Sophomores can be scheduled into the mini-shops program or take general business, typing, data processing, or Cosmetology I.

The required courses outside of the major include 4 years of English, 3 years of social studies, two years of math, a year of science, 4 years of P.E., and two years of either art, music or drafting.

Since basic and essential level courses have been eliminated, Freshmen are randomly placed in regular English and math courses unless the counseling department determines that their scores are high enough for placement in honors English or math. Honors English students are also placed in biology rather than general science during their Freshman year.

There were no extra support classes in English or math; however, beginning in the Fall of 1986, the school planned to offer algebra with support classes for those incoming students who scored less than 7.5 on their 7th grade math tests. These classes will meet for seven rather than five periods a week.

B. FAILURE AND PROMOTION

Students are not retained except at the end of the Junior year. Only those students who would not have enough credits to graduate were demoted then. On the other hand, every effort was made by counselors to identify students who were failing courses to insure that they made up these courses in summer school; this was an important duty of the counselors at Simeon. Also, in the past the policy had been to help students who were not doing well at Simeon transfer to other schools. Regardless of the current policy, it does appear, from Board figures, that in the past some Freshmen (less than 10%) were not promoted. For example, of those students who were Juniors in 1985, 7% had been retained in ninth grade compared to 8% who were retained as Juniors. Only a handful of students appears to have been demoted in the Sophomore year. Only 3% of the Seniors in 1985 had been retained in the ninth grade and very few of the Freshmen or Sophomores in 1985 had been retained in ninth grade.

Administrators expressed a concern with high failure rates at Simeon. One figure quoted by an assistant principal was that an acceptable failure rate was eight to ten percent. He believed that teachers had too much power when one could fail 60% of a class while another failed only 2%; this was unfair to students, he felt, and some sort of uniform grading policy should be introduced. The principal has called teachers in to talk about what he views as excessive failure rates.

Failure rates, e.g. those students who failed one or more courses, for each grade at the end of the second term between 1983-84 and 1985-86 ran about 50% for Freshmen, between 35% and 45% for Sophomores and Juniors and 15% to 20% for Seniors (Percentages were calculated from data obtained from the Board of Education.) End of the year failure rates were slightly lower while failure rates for the first and third terms were generally higher. Several teachers stated in their interviews that they gave more failures during these two terms in an effort to make students work harder since grades for the first and third terms are not part of the permanent record.

The policy at Simeon was that students may be failed for a marking period if they have ten consecutive unexcused absences. Teachers differed on how they treated students who had large numbers of cuts or absences. About a quarter said that failures due to attendance were more frequent than failures due to other factors. Almost one half stated they were willing to give make-up work or extra tutoring to students who were failing, including those who were failing because of attendance. Another group of teachers was unwilling to make any extra effort for students who did not attend class.

C. FACULTY POLICIES

At Simeon 55% of the teachers had one period of either hall or study hall duty, in addition to their five periods of teaching class and two periods of preparation/counseling. Another 23%, including the department chairs, had four or five periods of classes, one period of planning and preparation and two periods of a duty. Department chairs usually were assigned one period for departmental duties and one period of hall duty. Other teachers in this 23% are assigned two-period duties in such offices as attendance, programming or grade reporting. Teachers were used extensively in these capacities. Several of the math teachers worked in the programming office and used the computer there; two of the data processing teachers worked on grade reporting; several other teachers worked in the attendance office. One of the coaches was the head of the attendance office. The remaining 22% of the faculty, including most of the vocational shop teachers, taught seven or eight periods of class; about half of them also had one period of extra duty.

Only about two thirds of the teachers had a division. The other third had hall duty during divison. Department heads did not have a division. No teachers were assigned to the washrooms or lunchroom. P.E. teachers were assigned locker supervision.

Simeon had five regular substitutes who were available every day. If more than five teachers were absent, the assistant principal in charge of faculty affairs called the Board to try to get extra substitutes. If there weee not enough to cover classes, teachers weee called to the office over the PA system and asked to cover a class during one of their preparation periods. A number of teachers said they resented having to cover classes for absent teachers.

Teachers keep the same division students throughout their four years in high school. However, since there is an attrition rate of approximately 100 students per class per year (based on enrollment figures from the Board), divisions sometimes must be consolidated. One teacher reported that she only had about eight of her original division members left by the time they were Seniors. There were no separate divisions for students who have been demoted. Division teachers were expected to take attendance, keep order during division periods and get to know their students. Some division teachers took this duty very seriously, and called parents of division students if there were any attendance or other problems. Several teachers reported getting to know many parents of their division students on a first name basis.

D. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The administration strongly encouraged student participation in extracurricular activities. The principal stated that he would like every student to participate in something, whether it be athletics, the student paper, drama or music. "Kids who are involved grow socially. Simeon has a success syndrome: the more things a kid can excel in, the more he will succeed in the future. Therefore, the philosophy is to give outside activities to all kids."

Students must adhere to the IHSA eligibility requirements of maintaining a passing average in 20 credit hours of high school work per week in order to play on an athletic team. Although a 7.5 reading score on the seventh grade reading test is an entrance requirement for Simeon, exceptions were sometimes made for athletes.

E. ATTENDANCE

1. Division

Daily attendance was checked during division, held after fourth period, by the division teacher. Teachers reported absences to the attendance office; names of absent students were entered into a computer program which tabulated the number of consecutive days the student had been absent since last attendance, and the cumulative number of days absent during the year to date. This bulletin was supposed to be distributed the same day; however, if all the names could not be entered that day, it came out a day or two later. Several teachers said it would be of more use if it always weres distributed the same day because those students cutting class then could be more easily caught. Names of students who had more than three days of unexcused absences were placed on a barred list. Barred students were not allowed to attend class until a parent conference had been arranged with the student's counselor. The philosophy of requiring a parent conference before students are readmitted to class is that if parents are required to take time from work to come to the school, they will take more direct action in getting their children to attend.

If a student had been absent more than three days, he was required bring a note from a parent and report to the counseling office for a reinstatement before attending class. Students who had been absent from school less than three days were allowed to go directly to class provided they brought a note from a parent and showed it to each teacher. Teachers and counselors reported that attempts at forging parental notes were common. Forgeries that were caught led to further disciplinary action.

Students who had been barred once for absences could be suspended for three days. The teacher in charge of attendance and counselors admitted that suspension has not worked very well in insuring attendance. In fact, it only makes the problem worse since the student is kept out of school longer and will fall even further behind in his schoolwork. However, since there was no in-school suspension at Simeon, staff felt that out-of-school suspension was one of the few tools available to them. Further unexcused absences could lead to further suspensions; however, following current Board policy students may no longer be dropped from the rolls for attendance reasons.

In 1985 Simeon installed TELSOL, an automatic dialing system, used to report via recorded message to the home that the student was not in attendance. According to teachers who mentioned it, it has helped with attendance. Division teachers were also encouraged to call parents of students who have been absent. Many did call; some teachers, who said they did not ordinarily call parents, called division parents.

2. Cutting and Tardiness

Students were allowed two cuts in a class each semester. The teacher checks the attendance bulletin to make certain that the student is cutting rather than absent. As has been noted, since the Attendance Bulletin was not always available to teachers on the same day (and since attendance was not taken until fourth period division), teachers did not always know whether a student was absent or cutting class. Most teachers as they called roll attempted to find this out informally from other students in the class. After the third cut, the teacher sends a cut slip to the attendance office for that student. The student is put on the barred list, and a parent conference is required with the attendance officer before the student can again attend class. Teachers were encouraged to call parents during their counseling period from the counseling office if a student had been cutting; 12 of 20 teachers interviewed said that they called parents. Fifteen of the 20 said they sent the student's name to the Attendance Office after three cuts. One reported lowering student grades for cutting; two reported they did not have a problem with cutting, while two stated that they would send a student to the Discipline Office for cutting.

A student was allowed to be tardy five times per class in a semester; after the sixth episode of tardiness the teacher was to notify the attendance office. The student was supposed to be barred from class until a parent met with an attendance officer. Students who were up to ten minutes late arriving at school for their first or second period classes were given tardy passes and allowed to go to class. Students who arrived more than ten minutes late first or second period were required to wait on the first floor until the next period.

In fact, however, the reporting of tardiness varied widely among teachers. A few teachers were very strict in their requirements that a student be in class before the bell rings; in only four out of twenty classes observed, however, were all students in the room by the time the bell rang. Three teachers gave a quiz or dictation as soon as the bell rang. Most were much more lax. According to the discipline officer, some never reported tardiness. In some classes students were observed to enter the classroom ten or more minutes after the bell with no apparent action taken by the teacher. Similarly, students did not really begin clearing the halls until five to ten minutes after the bell had rung. One teacher and one hall monitor both stated that they did not even bother to assume their posts until approximately ten minutes after the bell since it was hopeless to try to clear the halls before then. On several occasions teachers who did attempt to move students to their classes more quickly were met with indifferent or surly responses from some students. Moreover, a few teachers were not always in the classroom at the beginning of the period. Two of the administrators and several teachers noted that part of the problem is that some teachers are lax in carrying out their assigned duties. As one stated, "we have a good system to identify cuts and truancy, but there is a lot of laxity in reporting; therefore, we are not identifying these students early enough."

F. DISCIPLINE POLICY

There is no in-school suspension at Simeon. The administration cited lack of staff and space as the reason. Since there was no in-school suspension, for minor infractions such as being where they were not supposed to be, students were often given brooms and a dust pan and put on hall cleaning detail for a lunch period or study period.

In addition to truancy and cutting, students could be suspended for offenses such as smoking, fighting and disorderly conduct. One offense which merits immediate suspension and a parent conference, according to the discipline officer, is disrupting a class or interfering with learning. In 1985-86 up to March 20th, 23 girls and 40 boys had been suspended for one to three days; 14 girls and 45 boys had been suspended for four to ten days. (Some of these were repeats.) According to the 1984-85 End of Year Report 117 students were suspended once, while 17 were suspended more than once.

The emphasis in disciplining students at Simeon was on parent conferences and counseling for the student. The Assistant Principal in charge of discipline did a lot of counseling in conjunction with discipline, and students were frequently referred to their counselors. There was a Social Adjustment Program for those students who had been officially designated as socially maladjusted. Finally, the school did refer some students to outside agencies such as mental health centers.

Careful records were kept in the discipline office on student offenses and actions taken. One aide, employed full- time in that office, kept the records. According to the discipline officer, offenses such as stealing and breaking into lockers were not common. The biggest problem was in the locker rooms, where students sometimes put their belongings in lockers without locks. Students caught stealing or breaking into lockers were taken by the uniformed officer to the police station and booked on charges "just to let them know what will happen."

G. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The school had special education for about 80 students, but no specially funded programs such as Options for Knowledge. According to the principal, such programs are for schools which have failed in some way, and Simeon has not been eligible for these.

Simeon students have participated in a variety of outside programs such as INROLLS, a program in which qualified Black students serve as summer interns in order to prepare them for mid-level management jobs upon completion of college. In addition, the school has an Adopt-a-School program with Bell Labs and with InnerCity Foods (an organization of Black Burger King owners).

The only special program for students at risk of dropping out was CWT (Cooperative Work Training). A student in academic trouble could be placed in this program by a counselor. The emphasis of the program was to teach the student how to get and hold a job, e.g proper work habits.

WESTINGHOUSE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

I. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Westinghouse Vocational High School is located in a mixed area of warehouses and small industry and triple flat houses on the West Side. Located on Franklin Boulevard with its two grassy median strips and bounded on the back by railroad tracks, the school is set off from most of the immediate residential areas. A community hospital across the street, an elementary school one block to the east and several industries located in small warehouses are the school's immediate neighbors. The main building of Westinghouse itself formerly contained the offices and factory of a candy manufacturer. It was bought by the city in 1965 and converted into its present function as a school over a three year period. It was originally intended to be a regional school serving the area from Wisconsin to Indiana; these plans, however, never materialized and the school remained a vocational school serving primarily the West Side of Chicago.

According to the report submitted to the North Central Evaluation Committee in 1984, although admission is open to students from all over Chicago, 96% of those attending Westinghouse lived in one of the following six communities: Austin, East Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, North Lawndale, Near Westside and West Garfield Park. Census figures from 1980 indicate that between 48 and 76 percent of the population in these communities had incomes above the poverty level. The calculated 1980 poverty rate for the neighborhood was 64 percent. It should be noted, however, that in 1986, 99% of Westinghouse's students were not residents of the immediate attendance area. Residents of the mixed commercial neighborhoods surrounding Franklin Boulevard live in older three flat dwellings, many of which are not in good repair, lending visual support to the census data indicating high poverty rates in this area. Gangs were reported by both Westinghouse staff and students to be a problem in the area. The principal discontinued 8:00 a.m. faculty meetings when he found that students were being harrassed by gangs outside the building while they were waiting for school to begin later.

The school is a four story building of tan bricks designed in a T shape with an unused tower several stories high. Adjacent to the school and connected by a bridge from the first floor is a new three story swimming pool, gymnasium and auditorium complex completed in 1983. The building itself is solid and in good repair. There was very little graffiti on the building inside or out; it was the policy of the principal and building engineer to remove it immediately. Staff has a fenced parking lot; however, some of the faculty park on the street in front of and beside the school due to lack of space in the lot. The small outdoor areas around the building are fenced off from the street with a chainlink fence.

Security in the building is good; nearly all students and staff rated the building very safe inside, although some students mentioned the presence of gangs outside as being threatening. One full-time uniformed officer and several part-time security guards appeared to be adequate in maintaining a safe environment within the schoool. The security officers serve primarily to keep unauthorized people out of the school, to prevent gang members and others from congregating outside the building and to insure order in the halls. The administration occasionally had a student arrested if he was caught engaged in an illegal activity such as breaking into a locker or stealing.

There was sufficient classroom space in the building for each teacher (with the exception of the P.E. teachers) to have his or her own room. The obvious advantage for the overall atmosphere of the school was that teachers appeared to be more motivated to keep the classrooms neat and orderly and to decorate bulletin boards or put posters on the walls. Some teachers even cleaned graffiti off desk tops between classes. Most of the classrooms are large enough to easily accommodate 30 or more students. Six or eight of the classrooms on one wing of the third floor occupied by history and math teachers are the exception; these rooms have been subdivided and are wider than they are deep, lending a cramped feeling to the rooms.

The vocational shops are housed in the largest rooms. The present principal had embarked upon a major program to update and modernize the equipment in selected shops. Using funds allocated by the Board to vocational schools for this purpose, a school has $40,000 to purchase equipment for one shop a year. The principal at Westinghouse decided which shops should receive the funds, in effect rewarding those teachers he perceived to be cooperative or good teachers. One shop teacher, while pleased to have new equipment in his shop, felt excluded from the decision making process in selecting the equipment.

On the first floor, opening off the foyer at the main entrance to the building (and the only entrance open to students during school hours) is the main office and principal's office, the programming office occupied by one of the assistant principals, an office with three desks where counselors sit during the first two or three periods in the morning to help with attendance and the issuing of tardy passes, Room 107 where tardy students are supposed to wait out the remainder of the period, and the King room which serves as a meeting and social room. The rest of the first floor was occupied by classrooms and shops.

The lunchroom, counseling and discipline offices and the R.O.T.C. classrooms are located in the basement. It is noteworthy that the counseling and discipline offices are set off from the rest of the school in a basement location instead of being given a prominent first floor position as in some schools. The counseling office is a large room with an open space in the center of the room and four cubicles formed by dividers, one for each counselor. Although the room is physically separated from the academic areas of the school, within the office cubicles there is very little privacy.

The library occupies a large room on the second floor. It is well-lit with tables and chairs grouped around a central stack area. Students can come during lunch or before they begin the school day if their classes do not begin until second or third period. The library closes after ninth period. Several teachers felt the hours should be extended to cover the entire school day. Opening off of the library is a room officially labeled a teacher workroom, which had, however, evolved into a *de facto* teacher lounge. A core of teachers assembled there for coffee, conversation and smoking during free periods. The librarians maintained a pot of coffee, and staff members often brought in bread and pastries. In addition there was a refrigerator in an adjacent room which enabled teachers to store food at the school. The regulars brought their lunches and ate in this room. The room was a source of some contention between the teachers who used it and the principal. He maintained that it should be used as a workroom, not a spot for teachers to socialize.

Between the first and second visit to the school, a new ditto machine was placed in the room, which did necessitate moving the coffee machine but did not otherwise disrupt the room's social function; several teachers mentioned this move as an intrusion into their space and use of time. Although teachers who spent their free periods in this room engaged in activities ranging from grading papers to discussing students with other teachers to discussing politics and the real estate market, most conversations were purely social in nature. The teachers who regularly congregated there had taught at the school many years and had developed a sense of camaraderie. A few times the conversation drifting out of the room was loud enough to be disruptive to those working in the library, and the odor of cigarette smoke was often noticeable.

The third floor houses classrooms and a few vocational shops such as CAFE (the commercial foods program) and the business department.

On the fourth floor is an old gym, the only area mentioned in the school as being sometimes unsafe. Some renovation and repair was to begin during the period of the investigation; a leaking roof caused a significant problem.

With the addition of the new gym building which also houses a meeting room, Westinghouse's physical plant appeared quite adequate for the numbers of students attending. There are some renovations needed, two of which, roof repair and storm window installation, were scheduled to be done next year. The building is also in need of painting. The building engineer believed the building to be very good for a vocational school and quite safe.

II. STUDENT BODY

In March of 1986, Westinghouse had a student enrollment of 1,571. (The Fall 1985 Enrollment and Housing Report recorded an enrollment of 1671.) There were 239 Seniors, 299 Juniors, 449 Sophomores and 584 Freshmen. The Freshman class was more than 100 over the anticipated number because an unusually large proportion of students accepted into the Freshman class enrolled in September. This represented a reversal in a tren[illegible] declining enrollment which saw the total number of students drop from 1820 in 1978-79 to 1560 in 1983-84. The student body was 100% black. Fifty-six percent of the students were female; forty-three percent were male.

Westinghouse recruited almost all of its students from Chicago's West Side. According to the 1984 report prepared for the NCA Evaluation, 96% of the students came from six neighborhoods surrounding the school: Austin, East Garfield Park, Humboldt Part, North Lawndale, Near Westside and West Garfield Park. Most students lived no more than a few miles away.

The general entrance requirement was a reading score of 6.5 or above on the seventh grade reading test, or for a student to score in the fourth stanine. However, Westinghouse did accept some students with learning disabilities. Most teachers felt that the reading scores did not accurately reflect the preparedness of students. One teacher who administered a short version of a reading test found that a significant proportion of his students scored at the level of fourth or fifth grade in reading. Westinghouse students consistently scored around the 28th to 32nd percentiles in reading and math on the TAP test. There was not any consistent pattern of variation among grades or classes between 1982 and 1985.

Westinghouse serves primarily depressed neighborhoods in the West Side. Over 60.5% of the students were categorized as low income on the Fall 1985 Enrollment and Housing Report. Jeans and shirts or tee shirts were the most common attire for students. There was a dress code prohibiting jogging clothes, shorts, sleeveless tee shirts, earrings and hats for boys and other gang insignia. Students not dressed properly were sent home to change; a student could be sent to the disicipline office for wearing hats and earrings or displaying other gang insignia. In the student interviews the most common complaint about the school was the dress code.

Student schedules were tightly programmed so that students were only at school for classes and one lunch period a day. There were no study halls at Westinghouse because, according to administrators, they did not have the space or staff. Most students were at the school for eight periods including lunch. Those whose first classes were not until second or third period could go to the library. Students were also allowed into the lunchroom before school started for breakfast. Although some teachers had scheduled counseling or preparation periods during tenth and eleventh periods, there were no classes. Most teachers as well as students left after ninth period, which ended at 2:46.

Since Westinghouse is a vocational school, the curriculum is somewhat different than that of a general high school. In addition to the required academic subjects (English, math, science and history) Freshmen and Sophomores take a series of ten week, two period mini-shops. This is intended to give them a sampling of vocational courses to help them decide upon a vocational major at the end of the Sophomore year. Juniors and Seniors in all majors except business take a four period vocational shop course in their major. Business students select one of four business tracks and select courses within that track during their Junior and Senior years. Changing one's major after the beginning of the Junior year is generally not possible. For a few vocational courses such as cosmetology and health care the selection of the major must be made at the end of the Freshmen year.

Although Westinghouse is a vocational school, it also serves as a college preparatory high school for a large group of students. Some teachers estimated that more than 50% of their students go on to college, junior college or to take some advanced training courses. Their estimates for the numbers actually graduating, however, were much lower. Those students who planned to go on to school generally majored in business or sometimes health care. Business majors accounted for one third to one half of all Junior and Senior majors in 1985-86.

Discipline in the halls and classrooms appeared to be good overall. Tardiness was not a significant problem after first and second periods. Students who were not in the classroom when the bell rang were not allowed in by many teachers and were required to go to the attendance room. Hall guards and teachers on hall duty were fairly strict in requiring students to show passes; students who flagrantly defied teachers or hall monitors were handled by the discipline office. Because most teachers did not allow students into class after the bell had rung, tardiness was not a major problem; when the bell rang, many of those students still left in the halls ran quickly for their classrooms.

III. FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty of 99 at Westinghouse was 58% white, 39% black and 2% Asian or Hispanic. Although the ethnographer did not observe any overt racial conflicts among the staff, very few of the black or white staff socialized with one another. In the lunchroom there were black tables and white tables. The *de facto* teacher's lounge adjoining the library was inhabited almost entirely by white male and several white female teachers; on occasion they were joined by one or two black female teachers. The principal stated during his interview that when he first came to Westinghouse the black teachers felt oppressed and that there was a group of white teachers who had been at the school a long time and who seemed to control things. He had set out to remedy this situation with the consequence that a few of the white teachers complained in the interviews that the principal favored black teachers and had discriminated against some of the more experienced white faculty.

The faculty at Westinghouse is very stable. Over half have been at the school for more than ten years. Of the twenty teachers interviewed, 13 had been teaching there for over ten years. The other seven had taught at Westinghouse for six years or less. Slightly over 50% of the faculty was male. Many indicated they had taken additional courses and a number of the teachers interviewed had Masters degrees.

Although the faculty was clearly experienced, there did appear to be a serious morale problem, particularly among white teachers who had been at the school a long time. Of the 20 teachers interviewed nine rated faculty morale as being poor or average to poor. Six felt morale was average, while only three believed it to be average to excellent. The morale problem appeared to stem from two sources -- frustration with Board policy, teaching conditions and the treatment of teachers in general, and conflicts which had arisen with the new principal over the past four years. Part of the conflict can be seen as a power struggle with the new administration over such issues as submitting lesson plans, while part of it may have been due to a resistance to change on the part of long established teachers who did not appreciate the new administration's interest in teaching methods. Dissatisfied teachers organized into informal groups and actively resisted administration efforts to require the submission of new lesson plans monthly and to reduce failure rates. On at least one occasion teachers supported a teacher whom they felt had been unfairly singled out by the administration for disciplinary action. Indeed, the principal stated that he made liberal use of the E-1 disciplinary rating to attempt to achieve teacher compliance. Teachers who were frequently tardy or who failed to hand in lesson plans were given E-1 ratings as well as those whom he judged to be incompetent teachers. A number of teachers, while they admired the abilities of the principal in promoting the school and appreciated his support for academic instruction, saw him as being autocratic and unwilling to listen to their positions.

Academic teachers under the union contract teach five classes a day, and are paid for nine periods at the school. Shop teachers put in longer days, with most of them teaching classes for six or eight periods. A shop teacher who taught eight periods had a duty in the school for all eleven scheduled periods. Some of the shop teachers interviewed felt that it was unfair that academic teachers were required to teach only five periods while they had six periods of classes. Nevertheless those who taught eight periods had opted for overtime. Since there were no study halls at Westinghouse, covering study hall was not a teacher duty there. Other duties divided among teachers included hall duty to keep unauthorized students out of the halls, division teacher, and lunch room duty. Generally academic teachers had period of school duty, duty as a division teacher to take attendance and counsel students informally, a lunch period, a period for preparation and a period labelled counseling and guidance which was set aside for teachers to counsel and tutor students in their classrooms.

The attendance rate for teachers at Westinghouse was close to 99%, one of the best in the city. In case of teacher absences the school had a few regular substitutes who were at the school almost every day to take classes and perform other duties. If there were more teachers absent than regular substitutes, the school notified the Board which sent additional substitutes if available. If substitute coverage could not be found, students reported to Room 107, where tardy students were required to sit, for the period. Teachers were not asked to cover classes during their free periods.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

The administration at Westinghouse could be described as lean and pared down. The principal and two assistant principals formed the core of the administrative team. Although a few teachers complained of excess paperwork and lack of support from the administration, the emphasis at the school from the principal on down appeared to be teaching first and everything else second. Student record keeping was left entirely in the hands of the two assistant principals and the four guidance counselors with help from clerks and aides. Teachers were not usually called upon to compile and enter student data into the computer on grades, attendance or discipline as were teachers at some schools. Although teachers did serve as hall and lunchroom monitors for one period a day, the focus of their time was on teaching. While records may have been less voluminous and less easily accessible at the school, the system was efficient, and paperwork was reduced to a minimum. The programmer, for example, scheduled students so that their classes were all held in consecutive periods; consequently, they did not have to sit in unproductive study halls.

Bursting with ideas and displaying a genuine concern for the students and the school, the principal, a former elementary school principal, gave the impression of being in control of everything at the school. Most teachers respected his efforts to bring order and discipline to the school and his emphasis on academics. Despite the conflicts they reported with the principal over failure rates, lesson plans and other issues, three quarters of the teachers interviewed described their working relationship with him as either friendly and formal or friendly and informal. At the same time most felt that, while he solicited staff opinions, he ultimately made the decisions. Only two teachers described their working relationship with him as strained.

Some of the things the principal was criticized for included relaxing the enforcement of policies on discipline, cutting and tardiness, and showing favoritism to some teachers while bearing down too hard on others. Overall, however, most comments were favorable. As one teacher put it, "He is a real principal; it is difficult for some people to get used to that. He's a very demanding man, but fair and trying as delicately as possible to improve teaching."

Faculty was also complimentary towards the two assistant principals. They particularly singled out the assistant principal in charge of guidance and discipline for his role in maintaining order and discipline at the school. Said one, "He is the backbone; he follows through to the end." Indeed, the role of the principal in discipline was seen as limited to dictating the policies and mediating with parents. The implementation was left up to teachers as the "first line of discipline" and to the assistant principal as the backup.

V. CHANGES AT WESTINGHOUSE BETWEEN 1978 AND 1986

Westinghouse was one of three schools in the study which had experienced a change in principals between 1978 and 1986. The present principal had begun his tenure in 1982. According to him, he had tried to institute five major changes at the school since the beginning of his administration. The first was more control over the activities of both students and teachers. He felt he had been successful in achieving this goal in that the actions of students and teachers suggested the school was orderly and in control.

Second, the principal had tried to encourage more student involvement and to foster greater school pride among students. As he stated, one goal was "for students to stop seeing themselves as the recipients." He had worked hard with the counselors in setting up class meetings and a student council. One of his biggest accomplishments, he felt, was in developing more communication among students and between students and staff. "When I first came students didn't talk to anyone," and teachers did not talk to students outside of class.

Third, the building had been cleaned up. The principal and some of the teachers described how, when he had first come to the school, there had been so much paper and litter on the floor that one kicked it as one walked down the hall. Through his personal example and by working with the building engineer's staff the halls were now clean. Graffiti was immediately removed. Although it did not appear to be active at the time of the study, the principal had formed a group of student "graffiti busters."

Fourth, he had tried to encourage staff participation in curriculum development and planning. Ideally, he believed, teachers in a department should develop and use a common curriculum. There was considerable teacher resistance to this idea in some departments, and it had not been implemented in those departments.

The fifth change, and the one in which the principal felt the least progress had been made, was in changing the methods of teaching. Indeed, changing the methods of instruction was one of the areas of greatest contention between the principal and faculty. According to the principal he had only recently been able to convince some teachers that changes were needed in their teaching methods in order to reach more students and reduce failure rates.

Now that some of his initial goals had been partially met, e.g. better discipline, increased student involvement and improvement of the physical facilities, the principal appeared to be putting more energy into improving teaching through reviewing lesson plans, observing and evaluating teachers, and initiating special programs to improve teaching methods. As part of his effort to persuade teachers to change their methods of instruction, the he had written a grant and received funding to hire a team of instructors from Chicago State University and to pay for 117 hours of teacher overtime to participate in a program he called Project Choice. The goal of this project was for the trainers from Chicago State to work with teachers individually and by department to develop teaching strategies in the classroom that worked for them. Academic departments only -- social studies, English and science -- participated. The program, which was underway during the period of the study, met with mixed success. The idea was for the instructors from Chicago state to work with teachers from these departments to help them improve their teaching strategies. Each teacher had the opportunity to meet several times individually with the Chicago State representatives and to observe one of them teach one of his or her classes. Although the English department entered enthusiastically into the program, there was more resistance to utilizing the assistance among teachers in the other two departments. Some teachers, who felt the program was compulsory and had been imposed upon them, resented it and were not willing to seriously try the strategies offered by the trainers. Some teachers appeared to have completely misunderstood the underlying reasons for the program or disagreed that they needed to change their strategies. Some stated that they were experienced and had already tried all the methods the trainers had to suggest. Many seemed unwilling to devote the extra time to preparing lessons in the manner suggested by the trainer.

Teachers who had been at Westinghouse five or more years under both the present and previous principals described two major changes which had occurred. First, the new principal was perceived as a real leader of the school. He tightened up faculty and student discipline. He initiated a dress code and lent his support to staff in upholding existing rules for discipline and attendance. He saw that the building was cleaned up and maintained. Working with parents, he succeeded in obtaining additional funds for making major repairs to the building. Most teachers, even if they had had disagreements with the present principal, believed that, in contrast to the former principal, he genuinely cared about the students and staff. He enthusiastically embraced many teacher initiated ideas instead of slapping them with E-1 ratings, as the former principal, described as "an embittered man" by one teacher, was reported to have done to those who had tried something innovative.

The second change which teachers mentioned was a decline in student preparedness and motivation. Most saw this as having come about since the establishment of the academies and magnet schools when Westinghouse ceased to be "the oasis of the West Side." Many of the academically better students were siphoned off, leaving those who were less prepared to attend Westinghouse. One experienced teacher who loved her job nevertheless believed that the greatest change at Westinghouse had been in the student population. Previously her students had been "more motivated and curious but just hadn't picked up on the necessary skills." Now she was getting "a lower caliber of students with less self-discipline. I'm finding more trouble makers, hostile to learning and arrogant about their ignorance. Kids act like spoiled rich kids." Another teacher who had been at the school more than 15 years felt that students were more visually oriented and passive. According to his polls one third have VCR's. As one teacher who had recently decided to leave teaching expressed it, "I wouldn't give up teaching if I could see more results; I work real hard but don't see the results to match the effort." Another teacher administered abbreviated reading and math tests to his ninth grade students. According to him their scores averaged between grade 4.5 and grade 6 in reading and math, scores which he felt more accurately reflected their level of preparedness.

Other teachers, however, felt that students were neither more nor less prepared than formerly. "Their skills are no better and no worse; the problem is a combination of the family and the elementary schools."

VI. WESTINGHOUSE SCHOOL POLICIES

A. CURRICULUM

At the end of the Sophomore year most students pick their vocational majors. Students wishing to major in cosmetology or health occupations must decide on these programs by the end of the Freshman year since both are three year programs. All Freshmen and Sophomores except those taking introductory business courses such as typing take a series of 10 week mini-shop classes lasting two periods per day. These are designed to introduce students to the various shop programs. Students are allowed to choose between physical education and R.O.T.C.

Although basic and essential classes in English and math were eliminated, entering Freshmen at Westinghouse are informally tracked. Based on reading scores, grades and teacher recommendations, Freshmen are assigned to high honors, low honors, high regular or low regular English classes.

The math and science curriculum is limited. General science and biology are the only science offerings, although the principal had plans to expand the number of courses in the future. Math offers algebra and algebra-trigonometry.

Westinghouse has several programs judged by various staff members to be outstanding. Students from the architectural drafting program had won citywide awards in recent years. A few teachers, however, expressed resentment that the students for the program were handpicked. As one teacher stated, "the teacher of the year last year was the architecture teacher, but he wasn't in the years when he had regular classes." The professional foods program (C.A.F.E.), although new, was pointed out proudly as an innovative program to train students in the field of commercial food preparation. During the period of the study students prepared the food for an awards luncheon at the school and for several other functions. In addition, the English department is composed of a very cohesive group of experienced teachers open to trying innovative programs and methods of teaching. Several of the English teachers interviewed felt their department was one of the best in the city.

B. PROMOTION AND FAILURE

The policy at Westinghouse was to retain students with three or more failures in all grades including ninth. According to administrators approximately 15% of the Freshman class is retained each year. However, no more than about 100 are ever kept back, since more would interfere with programming for the incoming Freshmen.

Students are required to make up failed courses in summer school; summer school at Westinghouse was planned for 1986 for the first time. One of the jobs of counselors is to make sure that all students failing subjects have been counseled to make up the course; students who do not make up courses in the summer must stay an extra year. Westinghouse had a fair number of students, especially boys, who were five year students. According to several teachers and administrators, students sometimes do not make up courses because they want to spend a fifth year at the school.

The administration took a strong stand towards lowering the failure rate. Teachers with rates over 15 or 20 percent were called in by the principal to go over what they felt they could do to lower their rates. The principal wanted teachers to lower their failure rates by changing their teaching methods rather than by lowering standards.

The school followed Board policy on failures due to absence, although teachers were given some leeway in handling this. Most said they were quite strict regarding absences. While some would allow a student to make up work, many said they would not pass students who were absent more than ten times and who did not do the work.

C. FACULTY POLICIES

Teachers were assigned duties as hall monitors and lunchroom monitors. However, most were not assigned administrative duties which would involved extra record keeping or paperwork.

Westinghouse had regular substitute teachers which reported daily; if more teachers were absent, the administration could request additional substitutes from the Board. Other faculty members were not asked to fill in for absent teachers.

Almost all teachers except department chairs were assigned a division. A teacher keeps all of the division students from the time they enter as Freshmen until they graduate. Many teachers reported a great deal of rapport with their students and satisfaction gained from getting to know these students over a four year period.

D. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

One of the couselors at Westinghouse had been designated as coordinator for extracurricular activities. The principal strongly supported more activities for students. However, finding teachers willing to stay overtime and sponsor these activities did appear to be a problem. The activity which the principal had most strongly supported, and in fact helped to organize, was the student council.

There were fewer available activities and less student participation at Westinghouse than at Simeon, which has a stronger athletic program.

Students must maintain a passing average in all classes during each marking period in order to participate in sports; the principal enforced this policy strongly and consistently. In the past this policy had led to conflict between the principal and some of the coaching staff.

E. ATTENDANCE

The school followed Board policy. Students with more than three unexcused absences must get a reinstatement from their counselor or the discipline office before they are allowed back into class. The counselors must fill out Disposition Forms; they can use their own discretion and may allow the student back in the first time without a parent conference. In addition, there is an automatic TELSOL machine which dials the parent's number and plays a taped message from the assistant principal stating that the student was absent from school.

Students listed on the attendance bulletin were not allowed back in class without a reinstatement form signed by a counselor or other staff member.

Some teachers called the parents of absent students in their classes; but many have delegated that responsibility to the counselors. Several of them stated in interviews that there were no phones made available to teachers, so they no longer called parents.

F. CUTTING AND TARDINESS

According to school policy, three episodes of tardiness are equal to one cut in a class. Teachers were supposed to send cut slips to the counselors. Some of them reported that they stopped sending slips if the student was a frequent cutter. Students who had three cuts were supposed to be barred from attending class until they got a reinstatement from the counselor; a reinstatement often required a parent conference.

The counselors had discretion in requiring parent conferences. Teachers could also request that the counselor set up a conference with a parent.

G. DISCIPLINE POLICY

The administration at Westinghouse followed Board policy and the Uniform Discipline Code closely regarding discipline matters. Accoarding to the assistant principal in charge of discipline, for every misconduct, even cutting or unexcused absences, a form is supposed to be filled out for the Board; however, "this is not always possible to do." There was no in-school suspension at Westinghouse because the school was never given sufficient staff for such a program according to the administration.

Punishment for infractions of the Uniform Discipline code was often suspension. Students could also be suspended for cutting or lack of attendance, although this was recognized to be generally ineffective.

According to the assistant principal in charge of discipline, breaking into lockers was the main form of vandalism at the school. This occurred most frequently when a larger than usual number of teachers was absent, and there was low teacher coverage in the halls. Students caught stealing or breaking into lockers or engaging in any other illegal behavior were given to one of the officers to be arrested. Students caught marking desks, walls or other school property were offered a choice of removing it or being arrested.

Truant students were sometimes taken to court by the truant officer with the hope that this would encourage the parents to get involved.

H. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

To encourage attendance and achievement the principal awarded buttons at class assemblies for perfect attendance and for attaining the honor roll.

There were no formal dropout prevention programs at Westinghouse. Students dropping out was not perceived to be a major problem at the school. The problem was less obvious because many students who were not doing well would transfer from Westinghouse to a general high school. Most of the dropout prevention revolved around individual counseling for students with multiple failures or attendance problems. The policy was to attempt to get the parents involved. There was an awareness that preventing students from dropping out revolves around attendance, and the truant officer was used extensively to try and keep students in school.

The school participates in the Adopt-a-School Program. Some of the vocational programs such as health occupations have work-study programs. However, the effectiveness of these usually depended on the ability of the teacher to place students.

The business department had been quite successful in placing students in work study programs. The business department also sponsored CWT (Cooperative Work Training) and DE (Distributive Education) programs.

One government funded work-training and dropout prevention program, Try-Out Employment or TOE, took ten to 15 students a year from Westinghouse, offered them 75 hours of training, and placed them in one of the companies holding a contract with the program. According to the coordinators of the program, fewer than one percent of the students have dropped out of the program which operates in a number of Chicago high schools. Students are chosen for the program by a staff member at the school, and are considered to be at risk of dropping out.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES:
SIMEON AND WESTINGHOUSE

I. THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The principal and two assistant principals formed the core administrative team at Westinghouse. One of the assistant principals was in charge of programming and maintaining student academic records, assisted in acquiring supplies, and performed various miscellaneous tasks as they came up. The other assistant principal headed the counseling and guidance department and the discipline office. Both had been at the school many years. Interviewed teachers praised both for their contributions in keeping the school running in a disciplined and orderly fashion. Record keeping did not receive the same emphasis at Westinghouse that it did at Simeon. Because there was not a separate attendance office, counselors were responsible for maintaining student records on attendance, tardiness and cutting.

During the period of the study there were also two assistant principals at Simeon. One was in charge of teacher affairs, while the second was in charge of the discipline office. In addition the school had separate attendance and programming offices. The attendance office was staffed by one of the coaches and a teacher. A full-time programmer was assisted by several teachers who worked during their duty periods in the programming office. The head counselor had been designated as a third assistant principal pending approval from the Board of Education. Careful and thorough records were kept on each student by the attendance and discipline offices. A full-time aide worked in the discipline office. In addition, teachers and an aide in the computer programming department assisted in entering grades and attendance records onto the computer. In short, record keeping received more of an emphasis at Simeon than at Westinghouse. While this insured that such information was readily available, it also meant more teacher and staff time and energy were devoted to record keeping at the expense of teaching and interaction with students.

One of the main differences in the principals at Westinghouse and Simeon was in their management styles. While 75% of teacher responses characterized the principal at Westinghouse as "maintaining control in his own hands" or "soliciting opinions but making his own decisions," only 32% of the responses from teachers described Simeon's principal in these terms. On the other hand, almost 50% of the responses at Simeon described the principal as "delegating responsibility," compared to eight percent at Westinghouse. Five of the teachers at Simeon interpreted this to mean that the principal had a hard time making decisions. Three quarters felt he was moderate to lax on discipline. While the majority of the teachers interviewed at Westinghouse credited the present principal with improving discipline at the school, several also complained that he had lately become more lax in enforcing the policies.

While the present principal at Westinghouse appeared to provide stronger, more directive leadership than the principal at Simeon, whose style was more relaxed, the principal at Westinghouse between 1978 and 1982, by all accounts, had offered very little guidance or direction, particularly to teachers.

II. THE FACULTY

The faculties at both schools contained large numbers of teachers who had taught at their respective schools for ten or more years. Teachers at Westinghouse appeared to be more organized into cohesive, sometimes political, groups than those at Simeon. In the past groups of teachers at Westinghouse had aligned themselves to oppose policies set forth by the present principal, such as turning in lesson plans, or to support a fellow teacher they felt was being unfairly treated by the administration. Teachers at Simeon tended to socialize together at lunch in smaller, more informal groups. The fact that there was no central teacher lounge at Simeon, only small departmental offices, may have contributed to this difference. At Westinghouse a teacher work room served as an informal teacher lounge and gathering place where a cohesive group of teachers congregated regularly during lunch and free periods.

Teachers at Simeon reported higher teacher morale, although at that school, morale varied considerably by department. Teacher morale among English teachers appeared to be particularly low. Seven of 20 teachers at Simeon, compared to three at Westinghouse rated faculty morale as "excellent." Five teachers teachers at Simeon and nine at Westinghouse stated faculty morale was "poor." Conflict with the present principal may have contributed to the lower teacher morale among some teachers at Westinghouse.

III. THE STUDENTS

Both Simeon and Westinghouse are vocational high schools with all Black student bodies. Although both have selective admissions policies, Westinghouse admitted students into the ninth grade who had scored at a grade level of 6.5 or higher on their seventh grade reading tests, while Simeon admitted those scoring at a 7.5 grade level or better. Simeon, however, also admitted atheletes and siblings of past or present students who scored lower.

Simeon had a student body of approximately 2,000 in 1985-86; the enrollment at Westinghouse was around 1,600. At both schools more Freshmen than expected had enrolled in the fall of 1985. At Simeon this produced actual overcrowding of classroom space, and at both schools contributed to some discipline problems.

While the TAP score of ninth grade students at Simeon have increased slightly since 1982, those scores at Westinghouse have declined. The change in scores was reflected in teacher assessments of the preparedness of students at the two schools. Most teachers at Simeon saw an improvement in the skills of students entering in the past five years, although some also thought student motivation had declined.

The majority of teachers at Westinghouse, on the other hand, saw a decline in both preparation and motivation of incoming students at that school.

School spirit among students was ratèd higher by students and teachers at Simeon, largely because of the school's winning athletics teams. More Simeon students than Westinghouse students reported participating in extracurricular activities. At Westinghouse there was an active campaign on the part of the principal and counselors to increase student participation, particularly in such organizations as the Student Council.

IV. DISCIPLINE

There was generally more order in the halls and lunchroom at Westinghouse than at Simeon. The lunchroom at Westinghouse was more closely supervised by staff. Students carried their own trays back which made cleaning up easier for lunchroom staff. In addition, the lunchroom was not used for any other purpose during a regular school day. At Simeon, on the other hand, closed campus had been instituted just before the study began. There was no staff supervision of the lunchroom. Students left their trays on the tables, and study halls were held in the dirty lunchroom immediately before and after meal periods.

In the halls between classes fewer students could be found loitering or cutting class at Westinghouse than at Simeon. At the former school teachers were permitted to close their doors as soon at the bell rang and to lock out tardy students. Teachers at Westinghouse who allowed students to leave class before the bell were called in for a conference with the principal.

V. SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

Both schools were judged very safe by teachers and students. Although gang members attended, they were not perceived to be a threat to order in the schools by teachers or students at either.

At both schools there were both very experienced, effective teachers and those who had little control over their classes. In general, however, teachers at Westinghouse felt the administration offered more support on matters of attendance, cutting and tardiness than did teachers at Simeon. At the same time, Westinghouse teachers were under more pressure to change their teaching methods. In addition, at Simeon there were more interruptions during class from announcements made over the PA system.

VI. PHYSICAL PLANT

Although both schools were housed in former warehouses, the building itself was in better repair and better suited to be a school at Westinghouse. Some renovations had been completed at both schools. The present principal at Westinghouse, however, had been particularly effective in organizing parent groups to lobby for the utilization of allocated funds to upgrade the school and to build a new gymnasium and auditorium complex. In addition the principal and new building engineer at Westinghouse had a particularly good working relationship.

IX. CHANGE AND STABILITY

The major changes mentioned by faculty at Simeon were the remodeling of the building and an improvement in the school's reputation and the academic preparedness of its student body. Most staff said school policies had not changed significantly throughout the terms of the various principals at the school.

The most significant change at Westinghouse was the arrival of a new principal in 1982. Under his leadership, student and teacher discipline had been tightened up; the atmosphere in the school had been made more conducive to learning and to teaching academic subjects; and major renovations and additions to the building had been completed. A number of teachers also believed motivation and academic preparedness of students had declined.

GURDON S. HUBBARD HIGH SCHOOL

AND

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

GURDON S. HUBBARD HIGH SCHOOL

I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Hubbard High School is located on the southwest side of Chicago in a residential neighborhood nestled between the commercial strips of Kedzie and Pulaski. Its attendance area extends from the C&WI Railroad tracks on the south to 55th and Lockwood (west of Cicero Avenue) on the northwest and 65th and Western/69th and the Pennsylvania Conrail Railroad tracks on the northeast. According to a report prepared for the NCA evaluation in 1982, Hubbard's students (as of 1980) came primarily from the Chicago Lawn, West Lawn, Clearing, Gage Park, West Elston, and Archer Heights areas of the city. (According to a *Chicago Sun Times* study, the median family income for West Lawn was $28,745 and for Chicago Lawn, $22,090 in 1985.) In 1980, the poverty rate for the area from which Hubbard students originated was five percent.

Hubbard traditionally drew students from several ethnic communities which were mostly white and blue collar. Area homes (single-family, one and two story brick homes) were built in the 1920's, 1930's, and after World War II. The community is middle class, perhaps somewhat more prosperous than the Washington High School community. Men traditionally worked as semi-skilled and skilled workers, managers and proprietors, and officials (such as policemen), according to the report prepared for the NCA.

A. SCHOOL HISTORY

The first Hubbard building was constructed in 1928. Until 1961 it was an elementary school. During 1961-62 it served as a freshman branch of Lindbloom and Bogan High Schools. On July 13, 1962, it was declared a full high school. The school was opened to relieve the overcrowding of Gage Park, Kennedy, and Lindbloom high schools especially. The man who had been principal of the high school remained in that position until replaced by the present principal in spring, 1984. According to assistant principals and teachers who came to Hubbard in its early days, at first, the students and many of the teachers did not want to come to Hubbard. But they liked it once they got there. Renovation was begun in 1963-64 to make the original building suitable for high school students. New science labs on the third floor, the library, and a new gym were built. At this time classes were held everywhere, including the halls and the lawn. Two new wings of the building were opened in 1966 and a back addition which housed a new lunch room, the pool, and the boys' gym was opened in 1975.

II. SCHOOL APPEARANCE

A. EXTERNAL

Located at 6200 South Hamlin, the high school is near the intersection of 63rd and Pulaski Streets, a shopping area with heavy traffic. The area immediately surrounding Hubbard, though, is quiet and residential. One and two-story single family brick homes and two-flats dot the streets. Their small lawns are well maintained. There is a parking lot for 35 cars just to the west of the school. Athletic fields are not located next to the school but rather are three blocks away. There is a small lawn facing onto Hamlin Street and a big sign, put up by the present principal, announcing the name of the school and its swim team victories. There is little landscaping, but the school has received money to upgrade the landscaping.

The high school building is a three story tan brick structure. From the outside the building seems to be in good repair, though it is not that attractive. Apparently, as recently as a year and a half ago there was much graffiti on the exterior of the building. The building engineer said that the graffiti, which does turn up on the exterior or interior, is often gang-oriented and is removed immediately when discovered. There is also now a $10 reward for turning in a graffiti offender. When people are caught they are either arrested or made to clean it up. Security people are stationed inside each of the doors. Though members of gangs are said to attend the school, the neighborhood is seen as safe.

B. INTERNAL

Hubbard is divided into three floors of three wings each and a back portion. The visitor is greeted in the main lobby by a sign saying, "Welcome to Hubbard High School - Home of the Greyhounds" and a picture of National Honor Society members. The main office, the principal's office, counseling offices, the discipline room, and the student ID center are all centrally located on the first floor. Posted on the walls of the nearby hall are the A and B honor rolls, a list of students with perfect attendance (with a sign saying "Congratulations" and "We are proud of you"), and framed student paintings. In a large glass display case, sports trophies are arranged next to a Hubbard Greyhounds jacket, pennant, and "Hubbard Pride" button.

The principal's office opens directly onto the main hallway. The door is almost always open and anyone, including a student or parent, can walk right in without having to go through a secretary. His office contains a desk, a conference table, and a low circular table with a plant on it. Student paintings and personal citations, including a doctoral diploma and a Perfect Staff Attendance award for 1984-85 are on the wall.

Located in separate cubicles within the nearby discipline room are the offices for the assistant principal in charge of discipline, the dropout prevention program staff, and the attendance officer. The counseling office is a bright and pleasant room which has round tables at which students can sit. Each counselor has a small office within this room. While the discipline room was often loud and chaotic, the counseling room was quieter and more orderly. The attendance and program offices are located together upstairs. Student programs and grades are kept here. There is a room with telephones that teachers use to call the parents of students absent from their divisions. Located in this area also is a math tutoring center, the social worker's office, and the math department office. (Next year a computer center will be located here.) The psychologist is located on the first floor not far from the main office. And the nurse is hidden away in a tiny claustrophobic room upstairs that says "Women's Washroom" on the door. She must go down to the first floor counseling office to make phone calls. The nurse's office could be more centrally located and more spacious.

The halls of Hubbard are bright and cheery. The lockers are painted brown and the walls are painted yellow. The only bulletin board and wall decorations in the halls are located in the main lobby area. Seven of twelve washrooms have been shut to keep order.

There are 62 teaching stations at Hubbard. Classrooms are located on each floor. Classrooms for single subjects are located on the same or adjacent halls or on a single hall but different floors. While some teachers have their own rooms, others move between classrooms throughout the day. Most rooms are average and certainly adequate in size, with the exception of shops, art and band, science labs, special education, and some business rooms (which are larger). Of twenty classes observed, there was student work displayed in four and recognition of student achievement posted in one room. Though most rooms were clean and relatively neat, some need painting.

On the first floor, in addition to the central offices and some classrooms, there is the auditorium, the library/media center, faculty and student lunchrooms (and kitchen), a social room, study hall, gym, a ROTC practice room, and an outdoor courtyard for seniors. On the upper two floors there are mainly classrooms plus a small girls' gym and the Hubbard store.

The auditorium was redone to the specifications of the performing arts department after it was destroyed by a fire on the new principal's first day at the school. The staff solicited the donation of both a baby grand piano and an organ. The auditorium is attractive and has good acoustics. The library/media center is small. It seats only 76 students at one time. The library appeared to be neat and clean, but rather congested. Students generally come in during their study hall periods. One study hall period is located in the library. There are 12,300 volumes. The circulation is about 25 books per day. Around 200 students use the library each day. English and history are the strongest collections. Decorated by student drawings and posters, the library is a pleasant but not a very quiet place to work.

There is an Olympic sized pool, a large well-equipped gym and a smaller gym. The facilities seem to be in good repair and adequate for student needs. The social room, which was recently redecorated, is used for faculty meetings. The senior lounge is a pleasant outdoor courtyard. Instead of graffiti which used to cover the courtyard walls, student paintings of subjects relating to Hubbard now adorn the walls. Large colorful displays of student art also grace the walls of the student lunchroom. The lunchroom seats 580. Recently the principal put in a large moving sign which would announce school events and sports scores during the lunch periods. The faculty lunchroom is inconveniently located. One must carry food through the kitchen, through a student study hall and up some stairs to get to the faculty lunchroom. There is also a school store which sells clothing and school supplies with the name Hubbard on them.

Finally, there is no general faculty lounge. Rather, there are several small rooms, some of which are located off of restrooms, which are used by people as lounges.

Because the school was built (with the additions) to handle 1400-1500 students and there are far fewer now, the school is under utilized. Since the arrival of a new principal and building engineer, there have been many improvements in the school's appearance and physical plant in the last year or two. The principal believes that making the school atmosphere more conducive to learning is one of his "strong points." He is "big on building and surroundings." The principal said that his predecessor had saved and banked $10,000. The new principal spent it because "It's for the students." Additional upgrading of building and grounds, including landscaping and repair of roof leaks, is still needed.

III. STUDENT BODY

Hubbard is a smaller than average high school with an integrated student body. As of October 31, 1985, according to the Student Racial/Ethnic Survey, Hubbard's enrollment was 1,085. Of that number 611 were boys and 474 were girls. The largest number of students were White (45.81%), the second largest number were Black (35.3%), and the third largest number were Hispanic (18.43%). (There were also one American Indian and four Asians.) Of the Hispanics, 156 were Mexican, 29 Puerto Rican, and 15 other. More recent enrollment statistics obtained from the school itself indicate that enrollment dropped slightly since the start of the school year. These statistics show that as of February 28, 1986, there were 300 students in the ninth grade, 226 in the tenth grade, 289 in the eleventh grade, and 177 in the twelfth grade; for a total of 992.

Traditionally, Hubbard served a middle-class White community. As recently as 1978-79 the student body was 91.6% White, 6.0% Hispanic, 1.3% Asian, 1% Black, and 0.1% American Indian. The integration of Hubbard occurred under the permissive transfer program. The first Blacks (22 students) came to Hubbard in 1967. These first Black students were peacefully accepted and no other minorities came for awhile because Hubbard's enrollment had risen and the school ceased to be a receiving school the next year.

There were many social changes during the 70's that affected Hubbard. The three most important were the construction of other public institutions (including Curie, a magnet school for the performing arts) in the area, the mandatory integration of the faculty, and integration of the student body through the permissive transfer policy. Student integration caused unrest for awhile but gradually was accepted.

An important factor at Hubbard is the dramatically changing enrollment. From 300 students 22 years ago, the enrollment skyrocketed to 2,600 in the 1970's and since then dropped steadily to the October figure of 1,085. There were 682 fewer students in 1985 than in 1979, a 26.31% decrease. What is the cause of this big change? One explanation commonly offered is demographics. The baby boom generation has graduated high school and the community around Hubbard has aged. The other explanation is that Hubbard's reputation declined partly due to stiffer competition with other schools (especially schools with special option programs such as Bogan and Curie) and partly due to poor administrative leadership. The present principal wrote the following in his Carnegie grant proposal:

> With the onset of the Chicago Board of Education's voluntary student integration program; however, many high schools on the southwest side took advantage of attractive opportunities to upgrade programs, attract better teachers and, consequently, attract a higher achieving student body. Unfortunately, Hubbard failed to act and the general situation became even worse. By the early 80's the student body consisted largely of both minorities (45%) and non-minorities (55%) who had been rejected by other public institutions.

There was little attempt to recruit good students or implement new programs under the old principal, at least in his last years at the school. More than one teacher stated that they feared the school might have been closed if the new principal had not come. They stated that the quality of the students is improving, due to his rigorous recruitment efforts, and that he has been able to get money to improve school offerings and implement new programs. According to the Board, Hubbard's enrollment of 1,035 in March included 532 students (or 51% of the student body) who reside outside Hubbard's attendance area. [There are presently 342 students in the Options for Knowledge program (including 28 for the University Scholars). These students come to Hubbard for special programs.] There were 19.8% low income students in 1984-85.

The students come to Hubbard from public elementary schools, with the exceptions of pregnant girls and disciplinary problems who are kicked out of parochial schools. Members of gangs attend this school, according to 17 of 20 students interviewed. (Twelve said the gang member did not cause any trouble in the school.) The administration prohibits wearing gang colors or insignias and indicates that graffiti is the only other gang-related problem. Apparently more Hispanics than other groups are involved in these gangs. Most students in the high school dress like students anywhere -- in jeans, t-shirts, stirrup pants, sweatshirts, etc. It is impossible to assess the students' socio-economic class by examining their mode of dress.

TAP scores from Hubbard indicate that while scores for seniors who achieve at normal levels or above in reading and math have dropped from 48-50% in 1982 to 34% in 1985, scores for freshmen who read at normal or above have risen in the same period (from 27% to 40% in reading and from 25% to 32% in math). A dramatic jump in freshman reading scores between 1984 and 1985 (from 29 to 40%) is due in large part to the principal's recruitment effort and his success in getting good students for the options programs. Hubbard students who entered ninth grade in 1982 with reading scores of 27% and math scores of 25% were able to improve these, raising the reading and the math scores both to 34% as twelfth graders.

Hubbard, like other schools, has its share of overage students, dropouts, and students who can't read at grade level. The percentage entering high school overage (above 14) was 23% in 1982, according to an earlier Panel study. In 1982, 68% of the entering freshmen were reading at normal levels. This percentage dropped to 61% in 1984. According to the Panel's tracing of students by ID number, Hubbard's dropout rate was 42.1% for the 1984 year.

According to Board statistics, the precentage of attendance for Hubbard students dropped from 86.9% in 1979-80 to 84.0% in 1982-83, rising only slightly to 84.7% in 1983-84. Since the new principal came, the percentage of attendance has risen from 84.7% to 86.8% (in 1984-85) and has remained about the same this year. The principal was disappointed that he couldn't raise the attendance figures for 85-86. For a recent marking period, twenty students interviewed had a total of 99 absences. Absences per student ranged from one to seventeen. The average number of days absent was 4.95.

Generally speaking, the students at Hubbard are well-behaved. There are relatively few serious offenses. The main discipline problems are cutting, tardiness, class disruption, and smoking. The discipline office follows the Uniform Discipline Code insofar as possible in assigning punishments. One disciplinarian complained that "the code is a joke" because it is so ambiguous and does not cover many things, such as cutting. School rules regarding attendance, tardiness and cutting, and misbehavior seem to be fairly clear and uncontroversial among the faculty. Several teachers interviewed, however, felt that there was some inconsistency in rule applications.

The students move in a relatively orderly fashion through the halls at passing time. They are quite noisy, though. There is a lot of congestion on the stairs, which are narrow. The library is not very quiet either. But if students become too loud or unruly they can be sent back to study. Most teachers the ethnographer spoke with believe that the 16-20 minute lunch periods, which the present principal instituted, cut down a lot on misbehavior at lunch. (There are seven lunch periods.) Fighting is not tolerated in the lunchroom.

Of the twenty students interviewed, six had been tardy (a total of seven times) during the last marking period. Asked what happens when they are tardy, the largest number (9) said that they are sent to the discipline office for a tardy pass. Fifteen said they had cut classes before (for a variety of student-like reasons: they didn't feel like going to class, it was nice outside, they didn't like the class). Fourteen said they had gotten in trouble in the school. Their main infractions were fights, cuts, class disturbances, and tardiness. The most frequent punishment (8 cases) was in-house suspension, followed by suspension out of school for two to ten days (6 cases).

Hubbard is a general high school providing a full range of courses and course levels. For those students who are not very proficient in math or reading, remedial and extra-instruction classes are available. Honors level courses are offered in English, social studies, French, Spanish, math, and sciences. There are also advanced placement English and special education.

Placement of students in levels is handled by the counselors at high school entrance. Thereafter, course selection is governed by a combination of the following factors: graduation requirements, student achievement, student career goals, and teacher recommendations. Counselors use the TAP and IOWA test scores to place students. Fourteen out of twenty teachers interviewed said that they had students who had been placed at the wrong level. The teacher can try to get the level changed, recommend a different level for the next year, or give easier work and extra help to the student.

In addition to its academic program, Hubbard offers graphic arts, drafting, and shop. Next year the wood shop will expand and begin to focus more on production techniques. Graphic arts will also expand. The business department offers the largest number of courses.There are seven work-study programs. The school, also, has a Jr. ROTC. In addition, Hubbard has a University Scholars program for college preparatory students scoring in the 7-8-9 stanines on the seventh grade IOWA test. It includes four years of English, math, lab science, and foreign language. This is an Options for Knowledge program. Other Options programs include High-Tech Career Preparation, Performing and Fine Arts, and Foreign Language. The present principal applied for and got these options programs (with the exception of languages which the school already had).

For the last marking period (ending in April), 60.5% of Hubbard's students had one or more failure. The assistant principal said, however, that the failure rate was really around 25%. It becomes inflated because many students take more than the normal load of courses. The normal load for freshmen and sophomores is four majors, art or music, and gym and for juniors and seniors it is four majors and gym. A large percentage of the failures are said to be "failures due to absence." Failure rates vary both within and between departments. Twelve of the twenty students interviewed failed at least one course in the spring '86 marking period. A number of students had multiple failures. Surprisingly, more of the students (10) failed P.E. than any other subject, followed by English and math.

Typically, Hubbard students attend school for 11 to 12 periods a day. (It must be remembered that fourth through tenth periods are only 16-20 minutes long--for lunch--and that a 40 minute class is composed of two of these shorter periods.) Many, but not all of the students, have at least one study hall. Most students spend the equivalent of five or six forty minute periods in class, including P.E. Because they have a shorter lunch period they get out of school 20 minutes earlier than students at other nearby schools.

IV. FACULTY AND STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

According to the Racial/Ethnic Survey conducted by the Board (October 1985), there are 77 teachers at Hubbard. Of these, 63% (49) are White, 33% (26) are Black, one percent (1) is Asian/Pacific Islander, and one percent (1) is Hispanic. The English department has the largest number of teachers. According to the principal, 80% of the teachers are tenured. By going through an old yearbook from 1976, an assistant principal showed me that not only had the faculty shrunk in size from 111 to the present 77, but of those on the staff in 1976, only 39 remained in the school. Of the 72 on the staff when the new principal came two years ago, only 47 are still here. There has been a one third change-over in faculty in just two years. From these statistics, one much conclude that the faculty, at least recently, has not been very stable. While some believe that the faculty has increased in strength the last two years, others note that well-qualified people have left the school. According to the principal, the faculty attendance rate is about 96-97% with only three substitutes at the school on a typical day.

Of the twenty teachers interviewed, eleven had been at Hubbard ten or more years. Of the nine who had taught at Hubbard less than ten years, eight came in the last year or year and a half. (These last figures are inflated because five people from the math department were interviewed and math is one department in which there has been a complete change over of personnel since the new principal came.) Eleven teachers had masters degrees.

There is no central gathering place or lounge for Hubbard faculty. A number of teachers use the faculty lunchroom before school and during their lunch periods, but the lunchroom is not a hangout and teachers do not generally go there for coffee during non-class periods unless it is their lunch. Some eat in their classrooms, department offices, or rooms around the building which are used as lounges. The small lounges generally lack decoration, but have a couch and/or comfortable chairs to sit in. It appeared that people whose classrooms or offices were nearby went to these rooms. They were not very attractive and did not help to foster a sense of faculty cohesiveness or collegiality.

There is a pervasive sense of disunity among the faculty. Apparently under the previous principal there was little communication among teachers, even within the same department. Each teacher "did his own thing." The new principal is trying to establish better channels of communication. He wants teachers from the same department to work well together in order to provide curriculum continuity and consistency. Some faculty members cooperate and support the new principal, others do not; although, there seems to be no clear cut factions. Because there has been so much turnover in the faculty recently, there is also the complaint that "we don't know each other."

V. TEACHER MORALE

Teacher morale at Hubbard is presently low. Of twenty teachers interviewed, none rated faculty morale excellent, though one noted that it was changing from average to excellent. Twelve rated it average or good; six rated it poor; and one declined to rate it. The two main reasons offered for low or declining morale are (1) difficulty adjusting to change in the administration and (2) frustration due to lack of student preparedness, motivation, or interest. The faculty is often described as lacking in cohesiveness and communication (even within the same department). It is also a faculty accustomed to having a great deal of individual autonomy and little administrative supervision.

While under the previous principal teacher morale was better, teacher discipline seems to have been worse. One teacher said, "Morale was better under the old principal...when no one was watching to see if you were working... He was an invisible principal. Everyone did his own thing. He didn't bother anyone. Many teachers can't cope under such a lax system." Indeed, the picture which emerges from conversations with teachers is one of a "laissez-faire type of principal" who allowed teachers to operate autonomously without concern for standardization and without fear of being checked-up on by the administration to see if they were doing their duties. Another teacher said, "teacher discipline is better now. The old principal never came to class, I don't think he observed me at all. He spent more time in his office or standing by his office door." (This teacher had been at the school twenty years.) She was not the only teacher to indicate that the old principal had seldom or never observed classes. Lesson plans were not routinely filled out and handed in by teachers. In some cases, students were dismissed from class when their teacher was absent and there was no available substitute. The homes of absent students were not routinely called by teachers. Some teachers were not at their posts doing their hall and other duties. Teacher evaluation had its effect on course content and student evaluation, too. As one teacher noted, "In the past, people taught whatever they wanted, graded however they wanted. It was totally individualistic." There was no guarantee that the same course taught by two different teachers would contain the same content. Failure rates and grading procedures within the department varied radically. Under this system there was clearly a lack of structure. Though undoubtedly many teachers worked hard and did their duties, some teachers became complacent.

Although morale was higher in the past, there was a growing feeling of frustration because Hubbard's enrollment kept shrinking and the new students were less prepared for high school work. [Statistics show that in the spring of 1984 when the change in principals occurred, only 37% of students in math, 40% in social studies, and 43% in science were working at or above grade levels.] Many teachers began to feel that the school was slipping in quality and that because it could no longer afford to be selective, was getting "all the rejects."

The previous principal, described by teachers as "a good guy" and "an easy-going kind of person," had been principal for twenty-two years. According to two teachers, he was disappointed that his career ambitions had not been fully satisfied. One teacher reported, "he became passive and the teachers got in a rut." The principal was well liked by both students and teachers; some people did not like the way he was suddenly replaced.

The new principal was brought in to "clean up the place" and "stop the abuses." Because of the way the old principal had been treated, teachers were on their guard when he arrived. He found an experienced faculty set in its ways and often resistant to change. Immediately he started implementing changes which limited the teachers' autonomy and subjected them to more administrative supervision. The changes seem to focus on goals of increased student supervision and increased policy and procedure standardization. While some teachers were able and willing to accomodate to the changes, others have had confrontations with the principal. As mentioned, there has been a large turnover in the faculty since the new principal came. Though these teachers have left for a variety of reasons, sixteen of twenty teachers interviewed cited conflict with the administration and resistance to change or inability to adjust to change as major reasons for teachers leaving.

The interviewed teachers believe that, for the most part, the changes which the new principal had implemented were positive changes that will improve the school. As one of the more philosophical teachers remarked, "At first every change is a burden. Then you see how it improves the situation and you appreciate it." A number of teachers thought that the new principal should have consulted them more when he first arrived and asked their opinions before he made changes. (The principal says that he is trying harder to solicit teacher opinions now.) A couple of teachers also cited incidents in which the principal had criticized and embarrassed teachers in front of their students. A number of teachers described the principal as "autocratic" and objected to his style rather than to the content of the changes he implemented. Reportedly, many of the confrontations which have occurred between the principal and teachers have been "personality clashes" more than anything else.

It appears that the decline in faculty morale began under the old principal but became worse with the change in administration. In summary, the factors relating to teacher morale problems include the following: a principal with a different style, sudden and wide-ranging change, loss of autonomy, stricter administrative supervision, and extreme faculty turnover.

The usual teacher load is five classes at Hubbard. Shop teachers teach six classes. Teachers have the equivalent of one full forty minute (or two twenty minute) periods for counseling and preparation. They also have either one or two twenty minute periods for lunch. When the principal changed the lunch periods to twenty minutes, the teachers submitted a grievance to the union. They won their case and were given the choice of having a twenty minute lunch and leaving school twenty minutes early or having a forty minute lunch and leaving at the regular time. According to the principal, 65 out of 75 teachers opted for the shorter lunches. He said that the problem was not so much that they disliked the new system, but that they resented the fact that he had not consulted them before making the change. Some of the teachers told the investigator that they did not think the short lunches were fair to the students, who can barely get through the line and eat in twenty minutes.

Most teachers (except department chairs) have a division. The division teacher acts as a "first line counselor." The teacher keeps the same division for four years. During division, important school announcements are made, activities are promoted, and daily attendance is taken. The division teacher also guides the students in program selection, encourages summer school as an option for re-taking a failed course, counsels students on graduation requirements, maintains a record of student credits, calls the homes of students who are absent from division and school, and refers those with special problems to counselors.

Teachers also have at least one duty period per day. Duties include lunchroom supervision, hall supervision, and study hall supervision, bookroom duty (for the chairs of the English and math departments); math tutoring, and administrative all-school duties (e.g., public relations, registrar's office). Between periods, teachers are scheduled to monitor particular washrooms. A detailed duty roster tells exactly when and where each teacher is supposed to be. A number of teachers told me that, under the old principal, not all teachers were at their posts doing their assigned duties. One teacher said the following: "The new principal came. I see the positive changes. The halls are cleared. Teachers are at their posts, which they never were before. In the past a Teachers Aide would come to study hall and take attendance and then leave." Apparently one of the principal's first actions was to seek out those who were assigned to hall duty but were not doing it and tell them to "get to their posts." One teacher expressed the view that the assignment of duties and divisions was uneven because of the principal's favoritism. The principal presently appoints the department chairs. In the past, they had been elected by their department. The reason for this, he stated, is that he (as principal) is the "educational leader" of the school.

There are four counselors at Hubbard, one for each grade. A counselor keeps the same group of students from high school entrance to graduation. Each counselor also has a group of special education students. In addition to their guidance functions, they have lunchroom duty. The counseling is generally more oriented to personal than academic problems. They spend their day talking with students, meeting with parents, and doing paperwork. They do not deal with daily absence or tardiness problems (which are handled by the attendance and discipline offices) unless these become serious.

The administration team consists of the principal and three assistant principals in charge of programming, building, and discipline. Two of the assistant principals had been at Hubbard at least 20 years. The assistant principal in charge of building seems to be a "troubleshooter" who deals with hall and lunchroom supervision, locker problems, CTA passes, students IDs, and security. There are now three full-time people in the discipline room. This system, implemented by the new principal, replaces a system in which a number of teachers managed the office for different periods. The new system provides more consistency in policy implementation.

There are six teacher aides and two school aides who work full-time. Teacher aides have a variety of duties: they work in the discipline office, the assistant principal's office, the program office, the mimeo room, the audio visual room and perform hall, washroom, and study hall duty. The school aides work in the discipline office, the in-school suspension room, and the bookstore and perform hall, washroom and tutoring duties.

In addition, there is a full security force present in the school. There is one uniformed police officer and one off-duty officer. There are two Board security people and a teacher's aide. The security officers' main duty is to keep out people who do not belong in the school out of the school. The police arrest students if serious illegal offenses occur. The other security people supervise students at passing time, check passes, allow students into the building in the morning, direct visitors, and bring students to the discipline room.

A school nurse, a social worker, and a psychologist work at Hubbard part-time. These people deal with student problems on a walk-in and referral basis. While the nurse deals mainly with student illness, injury, and occasionally pregnancy, the psychologist and social workers deal primarily with emotional and behavioral problems. Much of their work involves special education students. They counsel and test, prepare case studies, and parent conferences.

VI. FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION INTERACTION

Before he came to Hubbard, the present principal had been the principal of two Chicago elementary schools. The motto of Hubbard translates from Latin to mean "seeking the highest things daily." The tone which the new principal sets for the high school echoes this motto. Convinced that Hubbard is a fine school with the potential to become much better, he is working to "improve the quality of the existing offerings and sell the product more." The principal views the main problems at the school as: (1) the need to improve its reputation in the neighborhood and recruit better students; (2) the need to get teachers to work together in departmental units with standardized instructional policies and procedures; and (3) the need to further improve general discipline.

The new principal, a person of seemingly boundless energy, sets a faster pace for the school than the former principal. Because he is often in the halls or elsewhere around the school, he is difficult to find in his office and often seems to be in a hurry. According to the interviewed teachers, he is more visible and more actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the school than his predecessor. He is also quite accessible. His door is almost always open. The principal believes that he is perceived by his staff as methodical and organized, hardworking, ambitious, willing to make changes to improve the school, and efficiently using his time. Students, he thinks, probably view him as "getting around a lot, putting many rules on them, and liking them but having a temper." The principal estimated that he spends between 25% and 40% of his time in general supervision of the school, including the disciplining of students, 10% to 15% of his time doing administrative paperwork and bureaucratic tasks, 10% to 15% of his time talking with parents,10% of his time observing teachers, and 10% of his time doing other things.

Asked if he had a philosophy which helped to guide him in the running of the school, the principal said that when he makes a decision he thinks "do I want this for my own children?" He takes a personal interest and tries to be responsive to the interests of other parents and the community, also. For example, he has tried to improve discipline because parents in the area wanted more discipline. Cleaning up the outside of the building and planning the landscaping, in addition to closing the campus are, at least in part, responses to community criticisms.

He believes that the community wants Hubbard to have a strong college-prep academic program. He feels that "by improving the quality of existing offerings" and adding some special programs, the school will be better able to compete for the best area students. The main competition is the parochial schools and selective public high schools such as Bogan and Curie. In this community, many parents send their children to public elementary school and then on to Catholic high school because they believe there is better discipline in Catholic high schools and do not want their children to attend a heavily integrated school. Each year Bogan and Curie, whose reputations are better locally, take many of the best students from Hubbard's feeder schools for their special options programs. [This year the principal was particularly annoyed that Bogan, which is at 138% capacity and has a twelve period day, took 52 students from Hubbard's feeder schools for its options programs before the recruitment season was even supposed to begin.]

The principal and his staff put considerable time and energy into recruiting. For recruitment, they use recruitment signs, a filmstrip, and an attractive student folder. The recruitment literature advertises Hubbard's special programs and emphasizes that "smaller means better." The closed campus, strong building supervision program, good attendance and discipline systems, as well as 14 to 1 student/professional ratio, are all made possible by the small size of the school, according to the recruitment literature. Presently, counselors and some teachers are involved in recruitment. The principal suggested that the school needs a full-time recruiter.

In order to improve the quality of existing offerings, the principal applied for and received a $50,000 grant from the Carnegie Grants Program for High School Improvement. The grant is being used this year to deal with problems of an instructional nature. He wrote in the grant proposal that "the real problems lie within the area of instruction." He also noted that some departments "have failed to face the problems of high failure rates, low achievement and a 'turned-off' student body." The objectives of the proposal are the following: to begin a critical evaluation of ways to improve academic departments; to expose teachers to a variety of teaching styles; to determine student expectations, standards, and evaluation; to discuss the use of computer technology in academic areas; to provide increased teaching of writing; to study and implement a program for the return of dropouts; to find ways to increase parental involvement; to write both a student and teacher handbook (neither of which exist now); and to consider the feasibility of a senior independent project. The funds were allocated for an administrative intern, speakers, substitute services, over-time pay for teachers, equipment and instructional materials, and meetings/retreats.

To move toward these goals and to foster communication among the faculty, there was a weekend meeting/retreat in which thirty teachers participated. Also, department teachers are working together to standardize instruction by designing course syllabi which include criteria for student evaluation. While the English department had previously lacked continuity, consistency and communication, there is now a new standardized writing program for freshmen, called "Stack the Decks." In a recent marking period, the student failure rates of English teachers still varied tremendously (from 9 to 52%), despite the principal's attempts to get departments to standardize grading practices. According to the principal, the overall failure rate is down slightly.

He made several other instructional changes. He standardized the content of lesson plans, requiring teachers to hand them in weekly. In contrast with past procedures, all classes have substitutes during teacher absences. While in the past there were activities during school for which students could be excused from class, now all activities are after school so that time on task can be maximized. Formerly, students were automatically promoted whether or not they had earned the required number of credits. Students who were within two credits of graduation were allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and never actually fulfilling the graduation requirements. This year the principal implemented a policy (with which faculty agreed) stipulating that only those students with the appropriate number of credits could become seniors and only those properly qualified could participate in the graduation ceremony. (At a faculty meeting this spring, the teachers also voted to begin demoting students in the sophomore year.)

On a negative note, the present administration interrupts class too often with P.A. announcements and with visitors from the discipline office. In twenty classes observed there were 40 interruptions, 13 of which were from PA announcements and 16 from visitors, frequently from the discipline office. A number of teachers told the investigator that the frequency with which class was interrupted both irritated and distracted them.

The new principal has not made any major changes in curriculum, concentrating instead on the improvement of existing courses and programs. In addition to introducing several new Options for Knowledge programs for which he can now recruit good students, he has also improved the performing and fine arts program in order to better compete with Curie, an arts academy. A few teachers interviewed felt that there should be more vocational courses offered and more of a career preparation slant to the high school.

The principal has a policy of evaluating his teachers once a year if he feels confidence in them and three to four times a year if he does not. When he evaluates a teacher he looks for the "hygenic factors of a happy employee." Such a person has good attendance, is on time, has an attractive classroom, has good lesson plans, attends some after-school activities and games, has energy and enthusiasm in the classroom, is on his or her feet in the classroom, is prepared for class, knows the subject, does not read notes, and leads a good discussion. A good teacher also has to like students. If a teacher is not performing satisfactorily, the principal offers advice or criticism. If he or she is still a problem, the principal can give an E-1 rating. But he prefers to avoid this as it is a "messy process." Yet he has been able to release teachers he was dissatisfied with and get what he considers to be good replacements through the "creative" use of such things as the advertising of a department's teaching positions as Options for Knowledge positions and administrative transfers.

The principal said that he had heard that a few teachers "got their acts together" after he gave them some criticism concerning their teaching. Of twenty teachers interviewed, eight said they had received some constructive criticism from the principal. Nine teachers said they were evaluated once a year by the principal. The principal indicated that they were observed formally or informally more than once a year and four had not yet been observed. As one teacher noted, "He [the principal] always knows what's going on. He's all over the school."

The principal believes that he should play a very direct role in maintenance of student discipline. It is "the number one thing." He noted that he had to guard against getting over-involved in it. By being in the hall frequently, he hopes to set a personal example for the teachers.

Many teachers described the previous principal as a very lenient, if not lax, disciplinarian. But he helped with discipline and assigned different teachers to the discipline room. According to a teacher, the attendance policy was not enforced then, either. Another teacher said that there used to be more absences and tardiness. When the new principal came to Hubbard, he made a number of changes in the discipline policy and procedures. Among them were the following changes: a new system of hall supervision, full-time teachers in the discipline office, parental notification of student absences, an emphasis on academic work in the in-school suspension room, and a closed campus. The closed campus and the 20 minute lunch periods are universally held to have helped in the maintenance of student discipline. And, as noted, the precentage of attendance has improved slightly. The principal also noted that cutting is down by 50% this semester.

How do students and teachers view the principal? Asked about the principal's style of managing the school, the largest number of teachers (18) stated that he solicits staff opinions but ultimately makes the decisions himself. (This finding is somewhat surprising, given that some of the teachers complained that he was autocratic.) The second largest number (9) said that he maintains control in his own hands. Four said decisions come from the top down, while two said he delegated authority and only one said he was a team player. A few teachers felt he had trouble delegating authority. More said that he upholds both the attendance and discipline offices. Six teachers described the principal as a strict disciplinarian, two as between strict and moderate, two as moderate and one as lenient. (Two said he was variable and two declined to answer.) Some felt he was a consistent disciplinarian while others characterized him as inconsistent. There was a strong feeling that if a teacher was having a student discipline problem, he would take immediate action to do something about it. He gives teachers the support and backup they need. Students primarily described the principal as very friendly, easy to talk to, and just right (or between strict and not strict) as a disciplinarian.

Asked whether there had been any major teacher disagreements, the principal said, "yes, me." In addition to the lunch schedule grievance which he lost, he is blamed for what one teacher referred to as the "mass wipe-out" of the math department by advertising positions as Options for Knowledge positions. Other issues which have entailed confrontation, according to the principal, are teacher duties and student supervision, failure rates (which he wants lowered), attendance at school activities (which he sees little of), his appointment of department chairs, and teacher absences and tardiness. Of twenty teachers asked about conflicts between teachers and the principal, eighteen said there had been conflicts. When asked what kind of conflicts had occurred, one teacher laughed and said, "Where do you want me to begin?" Teachers mentioned many of the same issues that the principal had noted. Five said there were personality clashes. Other responses included the following: teacher absences and tardiness (5), teacher evaluation (3), unfairness of rule applications (3), failure rates (2), non-performance of duties (2), teacher disregard for authority (2), lack of principal's concern for a personal problem (2), and (one each) class room management and appearance, late lesson plans, and teacher transfer. While many teachers agreed that excessive teacher absence and tardiness should not be tolerated, there was some disagreement concerning failure rates, though. While the principal believes that a high failure rate means that the teacher has been unsuccessful, some teachers believe that they have already lowered their standards far enough and if a student cannot pass it is because he lacks the ability, the preparation, or the motivation.

VII. FACULTY AND STUDENT INTERACTION

Generally relations between teachers and students are friendly. Teachers interact with students in their roles as hall, study, and lunch monitors. The investigator noticed that some teacher hall monitors were ignored by the students they tried to control. Some hall monitors, though, only devoted part of their attention to the task, doing paperwork or grading at the same time. Security personnel seemed to have friendly and bantering relations with the students. The principal and one assistant principal play an active role in discipline maintenance in the halls and can often be seen talking with students.

In observed classes, teachers related to students through interactive question and answer type discussion and through individual supervision (with students working on in-class assignments, independent projects, or homework). For the most part students were attentive and well-behaved in class. In three of twenty classes observed, however, the teacher did not seem to be in full control of the class. The most common infractions were talking, fooling around, and not working. Students did not behave as well or seem as attentive in classes that were not well-organized and interesting. Student attentiveness seemed higher when teachers made the topic relevant.

Students described their best and worst teachers. In describing their best teachers, seven students made references to excellent teachers, who are smart, give a good explanation, and teach something. Six referred to the teachers as friendly people you can talk to and five referred to the fact that the teacher would help you. Students also noted teachers who could handle a class and let you have some fun. In describing their worst teachers, there were nine references to negative teacher attitudes. Students said such things as the teacher is rude, puts down students and makes fun of them, is not friendly, and shows favoritism. Four references were made to the bad teachers as giving too much homework, not covering the material adequately, and not giving good explanations. While two said their worst teacher was too strict, one said he was not strict enough. Three noted that the teacher doesn't teach but rather wastes time and talks off the subject.

Favorite classes were those with interesting subjects that were easy or fun and had good teachers. Least favorite classes were those that were hard, had a lot of homework, were boring or that had subject matter they did not like. They also had teachers who were described as poor teachers or who were just not liked.

VIII. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

There are many sports and clubs at Hubbard in which students can become involved. There are five girls and seven boys team sports. While Hubbard is not known for its sports excellence, it teams often do very well. The boys swim team and the girls softball team are teams with recent winning records. The principal attends the games and encourages teacher attendance at school activities. There are three athletic assemblies a year to congratulate all participants and to urge other students to become involved in school activities. He told the students at an assembly, "Learn to be part of high school life. High school life isn't just going home at 2:30." He announces the games and their outcomes both over the PA during division and on a new moving sign in the student lunchroom. He believes that extra-curricular involvement helps to keep the students in school and develops character. In addition to sports, Hubbard has at least 23 clubs and other extra-curricular activities, including a drama and a creative writing club, student council, and a chapter of the National Honor Society. After the new principal had been at Hubbard a short time, students wrote an editorial in the school paper which the principal perceived as derogatory. Now he censors the paper in order to present a positive image of the school to the students. Recently two groups won recognition: the chorus won awards in the state competition and the ROTC came in second in a city-wide competition. The principal hopes to have more assemblies to honor academic achievement.

During the investigative period, there were several special events. There was a faculty-student basketball game, an assembly for the National Honor Society, and International Day. International Day is a big annual event. Teachers act as sponsors for particular ethnic dances and meals. Students prepare the food and make food booths. Students are released from class to participate. Everybody has a good time and learns about other cultures. There was a marvelous musical produced by the performing and fine arts department, also. Art students painted the sets and music students sang and danced in elaborate costumes. The play had an extravagant Busby-Berkeley quality to it. Students from Hubbard's feeder elementary schools also attended. The play, then, was used for recruitment purposes to advertise the high quality of the fine and performing arts departments. Teachers complained that some students who were involved in the play would be excused from classes for two weeks near the end of the year. Generally, the principal tries to schedule student activities after school.

Sports and other school activity participation is considered to be low at Hubbard because many students work after school or commute a long distance to and from school. Teachers rated student morale as average. When asked if faculty and students have a sense of school pride, the largest numbers of teachers said no or never (6). This was followed by the responses: some of the time (5) and it is improving (5). If it was a neighborhood school or had teams which always won, some felt, the spirit would be easier to build. Of twenty students interviewed, nine felt there was a lot of school spirit, eight said there was some, and only three believed there was none. Students, therefore, were more positive on this issue.

IX. CHANGE IN THE SCHOOL

The twenty teachers interviewed were asked to describe the changes they perceived at Hubbard since they started working there. When many of the older teachers came to Hubbard fifteen to twenty years ago, it was an all or nearly all, white middle-class neighborhood school. The enrollment in 1970 was more than double its present size. The teachers believed that their former students were generally well-prepared for high school work. They were motivated to work and well-behaved. Though teachers and students had not wanted to come here when it first opened, they were happy once they got here. Faculty morale was good until the late seventies or early eighties when the reputation of the school and the quality of the students began slipping. The principal managed the school in an easy-going way and it was a pleasant place to work. However, a teacher who was new to Hubbard this year had a much different impression. He said, "It seemed embittered with a new principal restructuring the school and an experienced faculty unhappy about restructuring."

The most frequent change mentioned was the change in students. Seven teachers pointed to the following: change in racial composition of the student body due to integration, a decline in the preparedness and motivation of the student, and a growing discipline problem. The second most frequently noted change was the change in principal, cited by five teachers. They mentioned the change from lenient to stricter supervision of students and teachers, a change in style of management, recent efforts to improve the quality of academic programs and attract better students, and an increase in conflict with teachers. Four said that there had been changes in the faculty, an especially drastic staff turnover and a decline in morale, including more conflict with the principal. One noted that teacher discipline had improved. Four also mentioned changes in instruction-related areas: a move toward standardization in instructional matters and more recognition of slow learners and teaching of basics. Three referred to changes in the size and organization of the school; for instance, its drastic reduction in size, the introduction of more structure under the new principal, and the closing of the campus. Three noted change in the community (e.g., it's older age, the opening of rival schools, and an influx of new minorities, such as people from the Middle-East) and two said that parents can't deal with or motivate students at home anymore. One teacher felt that the curriculum had been watered down and another felt that the building appearance had improved.

The investigator experienced growing frustration while trying to locate students randomly selected for interviews. In many cases, student programs were not current. A seemingly large number of students were assigned in-house suspension, were cutting classes or absent, or were someplace other than where their program indicated they should be.

X. FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE DROPOUT RATE

Maybe Hubbard's high dropout rate, under the previous principal, was related to a number of factors. These includ: poor teacher discipline, poor student discipline, no standardized discipline policy or procedure, poor student attendance, frequent cutting and tardiness, no standardized course content and grading within departments, declining student preparedness for high school work, a passive and "invisible" principal, and strong recruitment for freshmen by other high schools.

The twenty teachers interviewed were asked why students dropout of Hubbard High School. Sixteen of the teachers said student attitude (e.g., lack of interest and motivation, boredom) was a main reason. Nine noted failure-related reasons, stating that students today don't know how to study and feel they can't do the work. Eight thought that the reasons had to do with the home and the lack of parental backup or appreciation of education. Five stated that students dropout to get jobs and earn money. Four pointed to attendance as the key. If students are absent too much they fall behind and fail. Three noted that pregnancy is a reason for dropping out. Two teachers each mentioned discipline problems, language problems, and inability to read at grade level. Being overage and the lack of importance of education in the community were also noted.

Of twenty students interviewed, the largest number (18) listed boredom and alienation-related reasons for dropping out. The next largest (5) number cited low grades and said that school was too hard for students who drop out. Jobs and drugs were also noted as reasons. The questioning on more specific possibilities yielded a wider variety of answers. When this method of questioning was employed. the replies were as follows: alienation and boredom (14), multiple failures (10), school discipline problems (8), pregnancy (7), jobs (5), gangs (5), drugs (4), caring for siblings (4), and reading problems (3).

There was no consensus between teachers and students when they were asked what the school could do to keep students from dropping out. The largest number of teachers (3) recommended more vocational courses and job training programs. Two also mentioned the need for more counseling and special help for at-risk students. Other suggestions were to provide more academic award assemblies, improve elementary education, offer more attendance incentives, and open more alternate schools for at-risk students. Three out of twenty teachers felt that it was a waste of time and money to try to keep dropout prone students in school. One of these thought that the remaining students would be better off if the trouble-makers were allowed to drop. Another noted that students have always dropped out but that dropping out only becomes an issue when there were not enough jobs for these students and so they end up on the street involved with crime.

Ten of twenty students interviewed felt that the school was not doing enough to keep students from dropping out. Though most had no suggestions for improvement, several mentioned that the school could get better teachers, have more tutors for those who need help, be stricter in enforcing discipline, and have more student activities to maintain interest. Two students said that teachers didn't care if they drop out and some teachers even tell them to drop out.

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

George Washington High School is located on the far southeast side. The area served by the high school has many of the characteristics of a small town. Relatively isolated from the rest of Chicago by the Calumet River, the area has many ties to Calumet City and Indiana. The boundaries of the attendance area extend from the Calumet River and Lake Michigan on the north to the city limits on the south and from the Indiana state line on the east to 103rd and Torrence on the west. According to a report prepared for the NCA evaluation, two distinct communities--East Side and Hegewisch--are served by the high school. Between about 92nd and 116th Streets is the East Side, a community traditionally inhabited by White ethnic groups of Irish, Greek, Italian, Russian and Eastern European descent. In recent years many Hispanic families have moved into the area. This area contains multiple story frame apartment buildings and one-story brick bungalows. In 1985 the median family income on the East Side was $27,507. Hegewisch extends from 126th street south to the city limits and is separated from the East Side by a large tract of undeveloped land and the Republic Steel plant. The predominant ethnic group in Hegewisch is of Polish descent. There are many single unit houses. In 1985 the median family income for this area was $27,945.

Washington High School is conveniently in the center of its large attendance area, at 114th Street and Avenue O. The community, as a whole, is predominantly White, working class (or lower-middle to middle), and non-college oriented. Traditionally, large numbers of people worked in heavy industry, especially steel and oil refineries, other manufacturing companies, and in transportation (e.g., railroads, trucking) servicing heavy industry. In recent years, the community and its people have been hurt by plant and mill closings and reduced production schedules . Though most students still enter the work world upon graduation, there is little work in the community.

Although the neighborhood of the high school is residential, the smokestacks of the Republic Steel plant are clearly visible from the school. It is industrial to the west and southwest. A faculty parking lot is located adjacent to the school on the west, and athletic playing fields are located just to the south. On the eastern side of the school is the elementary school which was built when Washington became a separate high school. Across the street, in front of the school, are small, one-story brick homes with small but well-tended lawns. Though the immediate environment is pleasant, the areas near the factory and near the state line are rather bleak and desolate.

II. SCHOOL HISTORY

Washington was founded in 1958 when a small number of upperclassmen transferred from Bowen High School. It was originally a "pilot project school" which housed students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Then high school grades were merged. By September 1959, all four high school grades were in attendance. The first seniors graduated in 1960. Because the school was overcrowded, a branch of the high school was opened in 1963 to service ninth graders living in the northern part of the district. In 1967 when the addition to the high school was completed, the high school was consolidated once again. Because of overcrowding, a separate elementary school was built next door. Separate principals were chosen for the elementary and high schools in 1972-73.

III. SCHOOL APPEARANCE

A. EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

The school, set behind a spacious and well-maintained lawn, is constructed of red brick. Though the central part of the building is two-story, the eastern and western wings are one-story. From the outside the school looks a bit like an elementary school, perhaps because it is mostly one-story. The school is adequate in size for its present enrollment. From the outside it appears to be in a state of good repair. No graffiti is evident on the building exterior.

The school is combatting a window graffiti problem by having student artists paint colorful murals on some of the problem windows. Though it is widely held that some gang members attend the school, the neighborhood is considered to be relatively safe. The institution of a closed campus met with community approval because it cut down on student disorderliness in the neighborhood.

B. INTERNAL APPEARANCE

Students enter the school from the parking lot. If they forgot their pencil or notebook, they can buy one at a little booth which is set up in the lobby before school. There is a glassed in bulletin board here which greets the visitor with the statements, "Excellence through Education" and "Education is a Foundation. Build on it." Also in the lobby is a memorial plaque commemorating a former Washington student who died in Vietnam and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The school auditorium is named after him. If one enters instead through the central door, one immediately sees student drawings and sports plaques on the walls near the main office. There is also an attractive sign which urges good student attendance. It says, "Good attendance equals good grades which equal a successful life." Elsewhere in the halls, colorful student art work is prominently displayed. There are also cartoon-like posters which discourage graffiti by announcing "babies mark walls." Near the main office there is a glassed-in bulletin board with a display of news articles about the school and its faculty and student achievements. Many of the departments located on the first floor have bulletin board displays relating to their subjects in the hall.

The halls (and the building in general) appeared to be dark and dingy when the school was first visited. The walls obviously had not been painted for sometime and were in dreary colors. By the time this research was completed, however, all the classrooms had been painted in pleasant shades of tan, blue, and green. The halls, lunchroom, and gyms are to be painted soon. Lockers were purposely painted bright colors in order to deter graffiti. Because the halls and stairs are rather narrow, there is congestion at passing times. Some of the facilities (e.g., toilets in the girls' room and water fountains in the halls) look small because the school used to be an elementary school. The interior of the school seems to be in generally good repair. The amount of litter on the floors increases as the day progresses but is no worse than at any other school.

An initial reaction to the school's interior appearance was that the school emphasized human over material resources. There was clearly evident pride in student achievement. At the same time, there was evidence that the physical structure of the building had suffered through wear and tear over the years. Faculty members stated that the facilities had deteriorated, also.

Classrooms are grouped by department. They are located on the same and adjacent hallways. On the first floor there are approximately 34 classrooms and on the second floor, 16. Classrooms are brightly lit and sunny. Their numerous windows face the lawn or inner courtyards. They are mostly average in size. Larger than average rooms include the science labs, art, shops, choral and band, and special education rooms. The only complaints heard about classroom facilities were from chemistry teachers who noted that the thirty year old labs were in poor condition.

On the main floor near the centrally located main office are the counseling and social worker's offices, the discipline room, the in-school suspension room, the assistant principal's office, and student ID center. Everything but the following is located on the main floor: classrooms for math, business, and social studies classes, the newspaper office, the faculty lounge, and the department offices for math and business.

In some departments teachers have their own rooms. However, in other departments (e.g., English, business, science, and social studies) at least some of the teachers must share rooms, moving from room to room through the course of the day. One math teacher stated that he used five different rooms each day. Only three classrooms (of the twenty in which observations took place) had student work or recognition of achievement posted. (Two of those rooms were used by the same teachers all day.)

The high school has two large gymnasiums and an Olympic-size swimming pool. The gyms seem to be well-equipped. They must be divided in half often, however, in order to accomodate two classes at once. There is also a large school auditorium. It is an attractive room but it only seats 614. There is a large student lunchroom with many windows which also doubles as a study hall. A separate teachers' lunchroom faces onto a sunny courtyard.

The Library Media Center is a large room in which 115 students can sit down at one time. The many windows overlooking the courtyard allow much sunlight to brighten the room. The library is very clean, well-organized, and moderately neat. It has 23,000 volumes and a monthly circulation of about 300 books. The largest collections are history, English, and science books. One problem is that the library is often used for non-related activities such as faculty meetings and testing. It is regularly used as a study hall. Students may come to the library during lunch or study hall periods. Teachers often bring their entire classes in.

Washington's main office is a large room which has a pictures of George Washington and plaques for educational awards commemorating exceptional service to students by four of the high school's teachers. To reach the principal's office one must go through the main office. His office also has a door which opens onto the hall, but it is always closed. The door which opens into a somewhat spartan vestibule in which his secretary sits, on the other hand, seems to be open much of the time. The principal's office is a large room containing a desk with many piles of papers on it, a long conference table with chairs, and a couch.

Near the main office is the discipline room. Across the hall is the counseling office. The social worker's office and the headquarters for a dropout prevention program are also located here. Students often sit in the main hall while waiting to see counselors because there is little waiting room inside the office. Near the entry is a small windowless vestibule with a few chairs. Off of this area are located the individual offices of the counselors. Without knocking, it is hard to tell if they are in their offices because doors are closed much of the time. The whole counseling office area is small, cramped, and uninviting.

The social room, located on the first floor, is a large and pleasant room which houses school athletic trophies and functions as a reception room for open houses. The teachers' lounge is a large and sunny room on the second floor above the main office. There are easy chairs and couches for those who want to relax and desks and bookshelves with course texts for those who need to work.

Most of the school's facilities are at least adequate. However, a larger counseling office, a separate study hall (to free up the library and cafeteria), and an attendance office could improve the school. It is significant that the school lacks an attendance office. As will be seen, teacher complaints concerning a tardiness problem and attendance-related paperwork seem tied, in part, to this short coming.

IV. STUDENT BODY

Washington is an average-sized high school with a diverse racial and ethnic composition. As of Oct. 31, 1985, according to the Student Racial/Ethnic Survey, Washington's enrollment was 1,616. Of that number, about half (813) were boys and half (803) were girls. Classified in terms of their racial/ethnic backgrounds, the largest number of students (758) were White, the second largest number were Hispanic (542), and the third largest number were Black (304). Six Asians and six American Indians were also in attendance. Of the Hispanics, 515 were Mexican, 24 were Puerto Rican, and 3 were other. Slightly more recent enrollment statistics obtained from the school itself indicate there has been a small decline in enrollment since the start of the school year. These statistics show that as of Feb. 28, 1986, there were 424 students in the ninth grade, 389 in the tenth grade, 444 in the eleventh grade, and 307 in the twelfth grade for a total of 1,564 still fairly evenly divided between boys and girls.

Before describing the student body any further, it is important to mention a central change in its composition. Washington traditionally was a neighborhood school serving a nearly all-white working class community. As recently as 1978-79, the student body was 89.9% White, 9.5% Hispanic, 0.1% Black, and 0.5% Asian or American Indian. Now, according to the school, it is only 48% White and has a 32% Hispanic and a 20% Black population. The recent integration of Washington took place under the permissive transfer program. The principal of the high school counts the peaceful transition to an integrated school as one of his biggest achievements. While faculty were nervous about the change at the time, many now mention the "melting pot" nature of the student body as one of the things they like about the school.

Another change has been in the enrollment. The number of students attending Washington has dropped steadily. The enrollment decreased 13% (260 students) between 1979 and 1985. The drop is explained by Washington personnel as largely due to two factors: (1) the post-baby boom drop in population and the aging of the community and (2) loss of local population as a result of mill closings and layoffs.

Washington students come mostly from lower-middle and middle class families. The 1980 poverty rate for the attendance area was only four percent. But in 1984-85, 28.9% of the students came from low income families. Only 1.4% of the students were classified as having limited English in 1984-85. Board figures indicate that 27% (or 428 of 1530 students) are resident outside of Washington's attendance area (as of March 1986). Students overwhelmingly come from public schools, though it is not unknown for students who have been discipline problems at parochial schools to transfer to Washington. It is said that some students are members of the Latin Kings and the Disciples gangs. The wearing of gang colors and insignias is forbidden by the dress code, but nevertheless students can be seen wearing them sometimes. Teachers who feel threatened by the colors send the students to the discipline room. Most of the students dress like high school students anywhere. Boys wear jeans and sweatshirts or t-shirts and girls wear jeans or stirrup-pants with blouses, t-shirts, sweaters or sweatshirts.

Though the scores on the TAPs (Test of Academic Progress) were somewhat disappointing this year, Washington is proud of the preparedness of its students and of their performance on these tests. Washington was ranked as the top general high school (i.e., non-magnet or technical school) in the Chicago public school system, based on its seniors' performance on the TAP in 1984. (They ranked in the 50th percentile in reading and 42nd percentile in math that year.) In 1984 the test also showed that Washington students progress well after entering school, raising their test scores between ninth and twelfth grades. Students, who entered ninth grade in 1982, showed a clear improvement in scores at graduation. Some of this improvement may be due to the fact that some students with low TAP scores left school before their senior year.

Reading TAPs:		Math TAPs:	
9th (1982)	40	9th (1982)	35
10th (1983)	41	10th (1983)	40
11th (1984)	41	11th (1984)	40
12th (1985)	45	12th (1985)	43.5

The improvement in scores indicates that Washington is doing a good job of educating its students. The principal credits his "experienced, dedicated staff" and the emphasis on the basics (reading, writing) in the curriculum for this success.

Yet it should be noted that Washington, like other high schools, also has overage students, students who don't read at a normal level, and dropouts. The percentage of students entering high school overage was 20% in 1982. In 1982, 71% of entering freshmen were reading at normal levels. The percentage dropped to 66% in 1984. The dropout rate varies depending on the kind of statistics used. The dropout rate determined by an earlier study of dropouts, by the Panel, was 22.8%. The attendance rate for Washington was 89.6% for 1984-85 and is approximately 89-90% this year. During the last two marking periods, ending in January and in April, 41% and 52% of the students failed one or more courses, about 35% of the graduating seniors go to four year colleges, 10% go to junior or community college or to technical/business school, and 3% go into the military.

On the whole the students at Washington are well-behaved. There are relatively few serious offenses. The closed campus, though disliked by some of the students, is widely held to have reduced cutting and to have made student control easier. There are four 40-minute student lunch shifts, which are identified on student IDs. Students are supposed to bus their own trays and (with adult supervision) most do. Food fights are not tolerated. The police are called if one breaks out. The atmosphere in the library is conducive to studying. Students may talk quietly. If they get too noisy the librarian can send them back to study hall.

At least four teachers interviewed complained about what they called the "hall problem." There are often students in the halls during class. Teachers attribute this to lenient administrative enforcement and ineffective hall monitors. Some of the security people, however, say that they can not get the cooperation of the teachers. Part of the problem is that there is no tardiness officer or attendance office. "Teachers have to use their own discretion on how to deal with late students. If a teacher won't let a late kid into class, he ends up just roaming the halls." Occasionally, security catches students hiding and smoking in the washrooms or halls. These students are brought to the discipline office where punishments are assigned. For the most part, the students are well-behaved in the halls, and the passage of students through the halls is relatively orderly. There is much congestion because the halls and stairs are narrow. At passing times teachers are supposed to stand near their doors and most do. On the first floor the principal can often be seen standing near his office at passing time to see that traffic flows smoothly.

It is important to say a little more here about tardy students. Because there is no attendance office, the procedures for dealing with this problem are rather cumbersome. Students seem to be somewhat confused as to what in fact the tardiness policy is. Twenty students interviewed were asked, "what happens if you are tardy?" Responses included, don't know, nothing - they let you in, they mark it down, they take points off your grade, they give you a cut slip, they yell at you, they send you to the counselor, you get a detention, and it depends on the teacher. The problem is that class tardiness (here distinguished from school tardiness) is handled by the teacher and the punishment is left up to the teacher's discretion. (There is also a difference between being tardy once or many times.) Because of the time consuming nature of the necessary paperwork and the perception that there will often be no disciplinary action taken, many teachers say that they find it easier to just let tardy students into class and forget it. Similarly with cuts, one teacher said that he first contacts parents and tells the office. If the problem persists and nothing is done about it by the office, he said, "I just forget them." He keeps them on the rolls and just marks them absent. Of the 20 students whom the ethnographer interviewed, two had a total of six cuts last marking period and 16 had a total of 44 tardy marks (ranging from one to thirteen for each student). The average number of tardy marks was 2.2. In 16 of 20 classes observed more than 30 students came late. Most often they were just allowed in without a word, though, in one case, the student was given a talking to, in a second case, the student was sent for a pass, and in a third case, the student was given a dentention (for a fourth tardy) and allowed in.

Washington is a general high school which provides a full range of courses and course levels. Students fulfill the standard Board of Education graduation requirements by taking courses in English, social studies, math, and science, etc. Courses such as Introduction to English, pre-algebra, algebra with support are taken by students who are deficient in their reading or math skills.

Scores from the 8th grade IOWA tests and from the TAP tests taken in high school, teachers' recommendations, and parental preferences are taken into account in assigning students to course levels. There is also an excellent honors program. It features four years of honors English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language. Advance Placement English is also offered. And there is a special education program. Teachers often complain that due to programming problems and test score inaccuracies, students are often placed in the wrong level. Of 20 teachers interviewed, 18 felt they had students in their classes who had been placed at the wrong level. Three mentioned programming problems as a major source of frustration. Teachers can try to get the student reprogrammed if it is still early in the year when the problem is discovered. Otherwise, they can individualize their instruction or give extra help and recommend a level change for the next year.

In addition to the standard academic subjects, Washington offers a good but limited shop program, including heating and air conditioning. But the shop program is seen as a "dumping ground" for dropout-prone students. Its business department offers the largest number of courses. There are also four work-study programs: Office Occupations, Distributive Education, Cooperative Work Training, and Industrial Cooperative Education. The Home-economics/Health department also has a work program. A new computer program, an Options for Knowledge offering, which the principal applied for, will begin next fall.

Students generally attend school for eight or nine periods a day. They have on 40 minute lunch period. Many also have at least one study hall, though some have more than one. Students are typically scheduled for subject periods, including P.E., for five or six periods a day. Students arrive for class either first or second period (8:00 or 8:40) and leave at the end of eigth or ninth periods (2:02 or 2:46).

V. FACULTY AND STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

According to the Racial/Ethnic Survey conducted by the Board (as of Oct. 31, 1985), the faculty at Washington totals 96 staff. Of these 60 (62%) are White, 32 (33%) are Black, 3 (3%) are Hispanic, and 1 (1%) is Asian. The faculty seems to be about evenly divided between males and females. The English department has the largest staff. According to the principal, over 90% of the faculty is tenured. (There are only four or five Full Time Basis (FTBs) substitutes). It is an older faculty with a great deal of stability. [Analysis of faculty list from 1977 to the present indicates that 52 teachers (of 95) here in 1977 are still on the teaching roster.] Of the twenty teachers interviewed, five have been at the school for twenty or more years, eight for 15-19 years, three for 10-14 years, and only four less than 10 years. (The average was 15.2 years at Washington.) Of these teachers, 13 have masters degrees and many have taken extra hours of instruction. It is an experienced and well-trained faculty.

Teachers congregate in a number of places in the building. During the first two periods (if its a free period for the teacher) and at lunch, some of the teachers gather in the faculty lunchroom. Depending on which period you go in, you tend to see the same people each day. Black teachers eat together and White teachers eat together at separate tables. Another gathering place is the faculty lounge. While people mostly go to the faculty lunchroom to talk and eat, people seem to come to the lounge to grade, to read the newspaper, or rest. The lounge is a quieter place. As in the lunchroom, there is a tendency for Blacks to sit with Blacks and Whites with Whites. The people who frequent the lounge during their free periods are mainly those whose classrooms are on the second floor, especially social studies and math teachers. People who smoke also come to the lounge. Some people spend most of their non-class time in department offices. For instance, the business faculty socializes in its department office. Relations among teachers seem to be friendly and cooperative.

VI. TEACHER MORALE

At Washington teacher morale is not as good as it could be. Of twenty teachers interviewed, twelve rated teacher morale good or average, but eight rated it below average or poor. None rated it excellent. There seem to be several reasons for morale problems. First, teachers are frustrated with what they describe as the "impediments" to doing their jobs, especially the "paperwork connected with teaching" and the procedures for student discipline. One teacher complained that "the load (of paperwork) keeps increasing. It takes away from your strength." Another stated that filling out so many forms "detracts from being a good teacher." Also contributing to morale problems is the prevalent belief that teacher efforts to maintain student discipline are not always backed (and sometimes even undercut) by the administration. Many feel that after they have taken the time to fill out a cut form or take a student to the discipline office, nothing happens, or a student's punishment is reduced by the principal if a parent complains. In addition to these feelings, many teachers complained about the policies and procedures concerning absences and tardy students. Because the tardy situation is left up to the teacher to handle and there is no attendance office, many teachers feel overburdened. As one teacher put it, "There's a lack of administrative support of teachers."

There is a strong belief among the faculty that Washington is a good school which unfortunately suffers from an image problem in the community. As one teacher said, "There are few students who cannot be well served here." Many of the people who have been teaching at the school for a long time believe that there has been a change for the worse in the student body. Students are seen to be less prepared for high school and less motivated to work than in the past. This change is not attributed to the change in racial composition of the student body. While the decline in student preparation and interest is certainly disheartening for all of the teachers, some have found that it contributes to a feeling of being "burned-out."

The usual teacher load is five classes. Exceptions include those teachers who have some administrative duties (and therefore a lighter course load) and shop teachers (who teach six classes). Each teacher has a lunch period and two free periods, for counseling and preparation. During the counseling and preparation periods, teachers talk with students from their divisions, evaluate student progress, and assist students in making subject selections. They also use this time to talk with parents. While most teachers have divisions, department chairs do not. The division teacher keeps the same group of students for four years, from ninth through twelfth grades, and acts as a counselor to them. For many teachers, their division students "become kind of a family." During division, important school announcements are made, school activities are promoted, daily attendance is taken, and group guidance is offered. Each teacher also has a duty period. The duties assigned include lunchroom and study hall supervision and reserve teacher duty. The reserve teacher (R.T.) reports to the main office at the beginning of his duty period to see if his services are needed as a substitute. The R.T. may have to substitute for a teacher in a different department, something which not all teachers like to do. Other duties are all-school duty (e.g., detention room) and departmental duty. In addition, all teachers are supposed to be in the halls at their doors during passing times and should check the washrooms near their classes. Hall supervision seems to be done mostly by teacher's aides and security guards. At Washington teachers generally perform their duties. However, the complaints were that not all teachers are at their classroom doors during passing times.

There are four counselors at Washington, one for each grade level. The counselor has the same group of students for four years, from high school entrance to graduation. In addition to providing individual guidance to those of their students who need it, counselors go to English classes four to six times a year to give information on graduation requirements, programming, and freshman orientation. There is also a career program for sophomores and college and financial aid advice for seniors. In addition to all of this work, the counselors also participate in the school effort dealing with absences, tardiness, and cuts by reinstating students, verifying notes, and requesting parent conferences. The counseling staff has been cut back from five. It is no wonder, as one security person noted, that students sometimes sit for two or three periods waiting to see their counselors.

At Washington, there are now two assistant principals; formerly there were three. One is in charge of programs and discipline while the other is in charge of counseling. Both have been at the school over twenty years. Teacher aides (T.A.) work as hall monitors and help out in the assistant principal's office. Security is good at Washington. Six T.A. are hall monitors. Also, there are three Board security people and one uniformed police officer. The police officer deals mostly with infractions relating to drugs/alcohol, weapons, truancy, and trespassing. Security people catch students who are misbehaving (e.g., smoking in the washroom) and bring them to the discipline room. Hall monitors check passes and supervise student movement in and out of the building and between classes . There is also a psychologist who visits the school one day a week, a nurse who visits two days a week, and a social worker who visits three days a week. The nurse deals with illness, injury, and pregnancy related problems. The social worker talks with students and parents about personal or family problems, makes home visits, and holds staffings to consider students for special education placement.

VII. FACULTY-ADMINISTRATION INTERACTION

The principal came to Washington High in 1975. Previously, he was the principal of two elementary schools in Chicago. The tone which he sets for the school is one of friendliness and commitment to the students. He is concerned with teaching the basics, with maintaining Washington as a good general high school, and with improving the school's image in the community. An easy-going kind of person, he sets a relaxed pace for the school. He can often be seen in the halls talking to the students or standing near his office at passing times. He believes that he is accessible to students, parents, and faculty and that he is highly visible around the school. He refers to his supervisory function as "managing the ambience" or "being around to see if everybody is in place." (The rest of his time is spent talking with students and parents, disciplining, and observing teachers.)

A major tenet of the principal's educational philosophy is that "the school is here for the benefit of the learner" and all objectives should be aimed in that direction. Discussing teacher disenchantment with the cut policy and programming inflexibility, he stated that "the priority should be the student over the teacher. Without the learner, we're not here." This philosophy may help to explain why the principal, according to some staff, sometimes takes the student's (or parent's) side instead of the teacher's side in discipline disputes. As part of this educational outlook, the principal believes that there should be recognition in the classroom of the differing abilities of the students. If failure rates are too high, he puts the blame on the teacher's "faulty instructional methods" rather than on the students.

The principal is proud of Washington's ranking as one of the top general high schools in the city. Though he applied for and received special Options for Knowledge program in computers (to begin next fall), he is committed to keeping Washington a strong general high school. Since he came to the school, he has made a number of changes in curriculum: the addition of heating & air conditioning and graphic arts classes; the expansion of the language department to include Japanese and French; the addition of AP English; the addition of two new work-study programs; and the addition of the new computer-assisted math program.

The principal credits the school's success on the TAP tests to two factors, in addition to having an excellent teaching staff: spending a lot of time on task and emphasis on the basics in instruction. To make the atmosphere more conducive to learning he tries to keep class interruptions to a minimum. Most of the special events, such as the celebration for Shakespeare's birthday, have academic import. Of twenty classes observed, there were only two public address interruptions. In the local paper, the principal was quoted as saying the following: "Everyone is a teacher of reading. Reading, writing, and speaking are extolled and stressed in all areas of our curriculum. We have an adherence to the basics." The principal also expressed some skepticism concerning the Board requirement that all students pass algebra, noting that a few years of basic math would be more realistic. He rated reading ability most important for students already reading at grade level. Following these he rated math skills and then job training in terms of their importance in the curriculum.

The principal supervises and evaluates his teachers in a number of ways. He asks to see their lesson plans every five weeks, collects copies of their midterm and final exams (urging them to test at the end of each unit), goes over their failure rates, and observes them formally and informally in their classrooms. He observes "the people who are doing the job" once a year formally, the average teacher 2-3 times a year, and the "low yield teacher" more often. The majority of teachers interviewed (13) said they were formally observed in the classroom one time each year. Before visiting class the principal sends the teacher a notification of the visit and a list of the things he will be looking for. Among things he is concerned with are the following: the display of student work on the bulletin boards; student notebooks containing evaluated work; reviewing the work from the day before at the beginning of class and summarizing the main points at the end of class; being on duty at the door at passing time, etc. Asked whether anyone had changed 7heir teaching in response to his suggestions, he said some had added the review and summary. Only ten of the twenty teachers interviewed felt they had been offered any constructive criticism by the principal.

Since they lost the third assistant principal, the principal feels that he has had to "be more of a hammer" when it comes to discipline. He sees himself as a "control factor" in the school. The investigator saw him bring as many as three students to the discipline office in one period. The principal said the following, "I act as the court of last resort...I uphold a punishment or scale it down. If a parent comes up with extenuating circumstances, sometimes punishments can be modified." His attempts to placate the parents seem to be related both to his concern with the student and with his concern with improving the image of the school in the community.

Faculty and staff take a somewhat different view of the principal's style of managing and disciplining. Of twenty teachers interviewed, the largest number (ten) said that his style of managing the school was to solicit staff opinions but ultimately make the decisions himself. Five said that he delegates authority, but three of these believed that he does not delegate well, sometimes overruling those to whom he has delegated authority. One teacher asked, "Is it wise to overrule the discipline office? I don't think it's good to undercut the staff specialists." Of twenty teachers interviewed, thirteen described the principal's role in discipline as lenient or lax, six described it as moderate, and one declined to characterize it. No one viewed him as a strict disciplinarian. There were five references to the principal's support of parents or students instead of teachers in discipline decisions, four references to inconsistency in his discipline actions, and three references to a lack of "follow-through" in discipline procedures. Characterizations of the principal's role in discipline varied. On the more generous side, one teacher said that the principal "is a very compassionate man. He brings that to bear in discipline decisions. Often the student gets the benefit of the doubt." Comparisons with former principals were often made. One former principal especially was described as a stricter, more consistent disciplinarian who backed the teachers.

The principal listed the cut policy and student program problems as areas in which there had been teacher disagreements. Sixteen of the twenty teachers interviewed said that there had been major conflicts between teachers and the principal. The largest number of references (5) were made to conflicts over student grades/failure rates and discipline. This was followed by references to teacher attendance and tardiness (4), teacher duties and class coverage (3), school facilities and classroom decor (2) and teacher evaluation and lesson planning (2). These conflicts appear to have been mostly individual conflicts. It should be noted that though there were complaints about the administration, at least on the surface faculty/administration relations were amiable and cordial.

VIII. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION

Relations between teachers and students are friendly and mutually respectful. It is common to see teachers and administrators talking, and sometimes joking, with students in the halls. The principal and assistant principals are often to be found in the halls and lunchroom. Though it is their duty to be stern with the students, the discipline room staff could be a bit more friendly to the students. The teacher's aide hall monitors often yell at students and are sometimes in turn ignored by students when they ask where they are going or ask for a pass.

Class observations offered a first hand chance to examine teacher-student interaction. The main method of teaching employed was interactive question and answer type discussion (in which the teacher would impart information and ask students questions to see if they understood the lecture or reading assignment). In 14 classes, this type of discussion was utilized. The second most frequent teaching method was the supervision of individuals or small groups as they worked on class projects or homework. Generally, attendance-taking, disciplining, and paperwork did not take up much of the class period. But it often took the students about five minutes to settle down. And, as mentioned, the large number of students coming late to class was a distraction. In most classes, students were well-behaved and relatively attentive. However, in five of the twenty classes observed, the teachers did not seem to be in full control of the class. (There was much talking and/or fooling around in these classes.) The investigator noticed that discipline problems were rare or non-existent in those classes which were well-organized and interesting or in which the teacher seemed enthusiastic about the subject and friendly and respectful toward the students.

Students were asked to describe the best and worst teacher they had at the school. Of twenty students interviewed, nine described their best teachers as good teachers who explained the subject well and made it interesting or relevant. Six said the teacher would help you with your work if you needed help. And six noted that their best teachers were "friends" who gave personal advice or help and were understanding people who are easy to get along with. In describing their worst teachers, six said the teachers didn't know how to teach, were disorganized, did not give good explanations, and the student didn't learn anything. Three said the teacher was too demanding or strict, one said he was boring, and another said he couldn't control the class. Three more cited bad attitudes as a feature of their worst teachers, saying that he's rude or mean to students, putting them down and gossiping about them.

Not surprisingly students' favorite classes were those that were fun, easy, or interesting and those that had good teachers or enjoyable subject matter. Least favorite classes were those that had subjects that were hard to understand, teachers that were not liked or boring, and too much homework.

Washington has the full array of student clubs, sports, and other activities. Though the school is not a sports powerhouse like Simeon, its teams make a respectable showing. There are ten sports and over twenty clubs and organizations. Some notable ones are the Student Council, a chapter of the National Honor Society, a drama group, and an excellent jazz band. Faculty are involved in these as sponsors and coaches. The administration estimated that only one-quarter to one-third of the student body is involved in school activities. For this reason and because the teams do not do that well, teachers interviewed did not rate Washington high on school pride. Ten felt there was seldom or never a sense of school pride; eight felt there was a sense of school pride some of the time; and two felt there was always a sense of school pride among teachers and students. Students, however, were somewhat more optimistic. Of twenty students, eight said there was lots of school spirit, five said there was some school spirit, and seven said there was no school spirit. These same students were mostly uninvolved. Only four participated in any school activities (sports, student council, and clubs).

Student Council representatives are elected by the students of each division and officers are elected by the whole student body. National Honor Society members offer a tutoring program to students who need it. Athletic eligibility rules must be met for participation in athletics. The principal believes strongly that a student's involvement in extracurricular activities helps to keep him or her in school.

Special events which occurred in the school while the research was being conducted were Senior Week, a Shakespeare birthday celebration, and grade pick-up day. Senior Week included a volleyball game, a senior dance, and various theme days (for instance, Hawaiian shirt day). For Shakespeare's birthday, students painted their t-shirts with Shakespearean pictures and lines from plays which they had read in their English classes. Some students recited soliloquys and acted out segments of the plays dressed in full costume. Finally, there was grade pick-up day. It was well attended by parents. Refreshments were served in the social room.

IX. CHANGE IN ETHNOGRAPHER'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE SCHOOL

When first approached concerning this project, the principal did not want to participate. He was concerned that his administrative staff would be over burdened with work and that the investigator's presence would disrupt the operation of the school. In addition, he did not wish to have any negative publicity concerning the school. But once he agreed to cooperate, he was fully cooperative. Teachers were friendly and helpful from the beginning. Many seemed to be pleased that someone had asked for their opinions and views.

X. CHANGES IN THE SCHOOL

The twenty teachers interviewed were asked what the school was like when they first came as a new teacher and how the school had changed since they had been there. (It should be remembered that the average number of years the interviewed faculty have been at the school is 15.) It was an all-white neighborhood school when many of these teachers came to Washington. Overwhelmingly, the teachers believed that the students then were well-prepared for high school and motivated to work. Attendance and discipline were good. The home and community were stable. Mills had not yet begun to close and most mothers were still housewives. Faculty morale was good. The principals were strict and consistent in enforcement of discipline. They supported the teachers. The school was a well-run place.

When discussing ways in which the school had changed, the largest number of teachers (16) mentioned that the students had changed. They referred to the change in race due to integration, to a decline in the preparedness and motivation of the students, and to a growing discipline problem. The second most frequently noted change was the change in administration or principal, cited by seven teachers. More specifically, the main change noted was that the current principal/administration was not as strict or consistent in enforcing student discipline as were previous administrations. The third change, noted by four teachers, was curriculum change over time. Fourth, according to three teachers, there are now more home and community problems which negatively influence the students' behavior and performance. And fifth, two teachers said that the building and school facilities had deteriorated. Two also said that faculty morale had also deteriorated (largely due to the feeling of lack of administrative backup on discipline procedures).

XI. FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE DROPOUT RATE

Washington's lower dropout rate is related to a number of factors. The school has a reputation for being a good general high school. Because it does not compete with other local public schools for its students and because it has a network of good elementary feeder schools, Washington has little trouble attracting good students. It has a well trained, experienced, and, for the most part, dedicated staff. The staff has been quite stable. There is very good teacher discipline and (with the exception of the tardy problem) good student discipline and an emphasis on attendance. The principal has a strong commitment to the student, a clear educational philosophy, and a set of expectations for student learning which he communicates to his staff. The curriculum is varied and offers opportunities for honors as well as "remedial" work. Classroom teaching style involves more interactive discussion and less lecturing and seatwork. There is an emphasis on the basics (especially reading) and a maximization of time devoted to the task of teaching without interruption. By Chicago norms, students score well on standardized achievement tests and increase their scores between ninth and twelfth grade.

Both teachers and students were asked why students drop out of Washington High School. Fourteen teachers gave family and home problems as a main reason for dropping out. The second largest number (9) referred to the students' educational attitude (as lacking motivation, disinterested, bored, or frustrated). Four noted the need to get jobs and earn money; three mentioned gangs, pregnancy and excessive absences or truancy; two mentioned drugs, inability to read at grade level, and peer pressure; and one noted each of the following: being overage, having discipline problems, and having language (English) problems.

Students answered somewhat differently, but they, too, highlighted attitude problems. The largest number (15) noted alienation and boredom-related reasons for dropping out. Second most frequently mentioned (by 6 students) were reasons relating to feelings of failure or perceptions that the work was too hard. Three students mentioned the need to get a job, two noted drug problems, one mentioned gang involvement, one cited discipline problems; and three referred to other reasons (e.g., peer pressure, home trouble, desire to party).

Asked what else the school could do to keep students from dropping out, teachers and students gave a wide variety of answers. Most commonly mentioned by both; however, were: (1) a need for more vocational courses and skills-oriented programs and (2) more special programs for at-risk students (or the inclusion of more students in existing programs, such as TNT (Teens 'N Teachers)). Teachers also recommended the following things: more parental involvement, more involvement of the teacher with the student as whole person, more one-to-one attention, less emphasis on and stigma concerning both failures and being overage, giving more attendance incentives, need for a full-time psychologist, a need to tailor instruction to student needs, more disciplinary follow-through and kindness, and getting rid of the unrealistic Renaissance course requirements. Students suggested the following: the offering of less boring and more relevant classes, the need for more student clubs and activities, clarification of the failure due to absence policy, the extension of more attention and help to students who are absent, failing, or want to dropout.

WASHINGTON AND HUBBARD

SUMMARY OF CONTRASTS

I. PRINCIPAL

The principal at Washington sets an easy-going and friendly tone for the school. His educational philosophy emphasizes a strong commitment to the student. He believes firmly in the concept of the general high school with a focus on the basics, especially reading, through out the curriculum. His concern with the image of the school is reflected in strong public relations. Though he is active in the enforcement of student discipline, he is seen to be an inconsistent disciplinarian.

The current principal at Hubbard sets a more energetic pace and a tone of concern with school improvement. He is committed to improving the quality of existing programs, standardizing instruction, tightening student supervision, recruiting better students, and enhancing the school's image in the community. His predecessor is described as having a more laissez-faire style of management, as being less visible and less actively involved in the day-to-day running of the school. It is widely believed that under his tenure, the school's reputation declined as the quality of its students declined. The current principal is trying to reverse that trend.

While both current principals seem to elicit teachers' opinions and ultimately make the decisions themselves, Hubbard's principal is seen as more autocratic. The principal of Washington has cordial relations with his staff. At Hubbard, however, there has been much conflict between the new principal and his staff.

II. FACULTY

The majority of staff at both schools is White. Both staffs have many experienced, older teachers. Of the teachers who were interviewed, the average teacher had been at Washington 15.2 years and at Hubbard, 10 years. While 90% of the Washington teachers are tenured, only about 80% are tenured at Hubbard. Washington's faculty has been more stable in recent years also. For 1985 and 1986 Washington's rate of academic staff attrition was 12.3% as compared with Hubbard's rate of 29.4%. It appeared that Hubbard's higher rate of attrition was directly related to the recent change in administration and the acrimony which that has caused. According to Hubbard faculty members, teacher morale was better under the old principal when teachers had virtually total autonomy, including freedom from administrative supervision. But morale began to slip and apathy to grow with decline in student quality and school reputation. When the new principal arrived, some Hubbard teachers found that they were either unable or unwilling to adjust to the changes which he had implemented, and they left the school (voluntarily or involuntarily). Many teachers agreed with the reforms the new principal has begun, but still there remains a mood of paranoia and alienation among Hubbard teachers. At Washington, in contrast, there is a significant amount of teacher "burnout" and discouragement but virtually no conflict. Washington teachers said that they felt frustrated by lower levels of student preparedness and motivation and by what they considered excessive loads of paperwork which took time away from their teaching. Washington's faculty seems to have a higher level of cohesiveness and collegiality. There is more fragmentation and lack of communication among teachers at Hubbard. At both schools, however, there are many dedicated teachers.

III. STUDENTS

Both Washington and Hubbard were formerly lower-middle or middle class White ethnic schools. Both have been integrated in recent years. The percentage of white students in the two schools is similar, but Hubbard has a high percentage of Blacks while Washington has a higher percentage of Hispanics. Over the last few years Hubbard and Washington have received similar students in terms of the percentage overage and the precentage reading below normal for their grade levels upon freshmen entrance. (Hubbard is only slightly higher in these categories.) Since 1982 Washington freshmen have scored higher, on the whole, on the TAP tests. (Both schools, however, show an improvement in reading and math scores for the TAPs between freshman and senior year.) Two differences, however, are that Washington now has a higher number of students from lower income families and Hubbard has almost twice as many students from outside its attendance area. In a recent marking period Hubbard students had a higher percentage of course failures than Washington students. Since at least 1979, Washington has had a somewhat higher attendance rate than Hubbard. (While Washington's rate has been between 88% and 90%, Hubbard's rate has been between 84% and 86%.) Hubbard is a smaller school and its enrollment has shrunk more drastically than Washington's. Despite the overall similarity of the students entering the two schools, Hubbard has a dropout rate almost twice that of Washington. (In 1984, Hubbard's rate was 42.1% and Washington's was 22.8% acccording to a previous Panel study.)

IV. DISCIPLINE

Both schools are preceived to be safe places with some gang members in attendance but rarely any gang-related trouble. Students are relatively well-behaved at both schools. There was no observed significant difference, in hall and classroom and control in the two schools, with the exception of tardy students. At Washington, students were late in 16 of 20 classes observed, while at Hubbard there were tardy students in 12 classes. Washington teachers complained more about the number of students in the halls during class. The tardiness problem at Washington was related to the fact that the school has no attendance office and the handling of tardy students is left to the discretion of the teacher. This results in a great deal of variation and inconsistency in enforcement.

There is clear evidence that discipline at Hubbard was not strong in the past as it is now under the new principal. This applies to teacher as well as student discipline. In the past, when teacher supervision at Hubbard was minimal, not all classes of absent teachers were covered and not all teachers were at their posts performing their assigned duties. This situation resulted in less supervision of the students. Hubbard teachers and administrators indicated that there used to be more tardiness, hall disorder, and cutting problems than there are now.

Instituting closed campus at both schools is believed to have reduced cutting and outside influences. The shorter lunch periods at Hubbard are also said to have contributed to student order. Washington teachers and assistant principals rotate shifts in the discipline room, while at Hubbard, there is a full-time staff assigned to the room (though in the past, the system was the same as Washington's). At Hubbard, there were fewer complaints about inconsistency in the application of discipline rules than there were at Washington. Based on teachers' statements at both schools, it appears that the principal at Hubbard supported the decisions of his disciplinary team to a greater extent than the principal at Washington, who often gave students the benefit of the doubt or submitted to parental pressure to reduce punishments.

V. ATMOSPHERE

Both schools seemed safe and conducive to learning. The major source of class disruption at Washington was the large number of students coming late to class. At Hubbard, there were frequent class interruptions by public address announcements and from discipline room staff looking for students. In observed classes, there were almost twice as many class interruptions (e.g., public address announcements, visitors, discipline incidents) at Hubbard (40) than at Washington (23). Hubbard teachers complained more about the disruption of class by public address announcements than did Washington teachers. The present principals at both schools emphasized that time spent on the task of teaching should be maximized. Both schedule most school activities after school; although, the previous principal at Hubbard would allow students to leave class to attend special events.

VI. PHYSICAL PLANT

Both schools had once been elementary schools. Perhaps because it is one-story, Washington looks more like an elementary school than Hubbard, which is three-story. While Washington seems small and Hubbard large, it must be remembered that Washington's enrollment is larger and

Hubbard's physical plant is under-utilized. There is little graffiti in either school. Hubbard appears brighter and cheerier inside than Washington. A number of teachers at Washington complained about the deterioration of the building and its facilities. Both schools have new engineers. The new principal at Hubbard has made a number of building improvements and has plans to do more in this area.

VII. STUDENT PROGRESS

As noted, students at both schools improve their TAP scores by the time they are seniors. The predominant practice at both schools is to test once a week or at the end of the academic unit. Counselors at both schools use the results or standardized tests to help place students in courses and teachers use them to informally track students. Both current principals emphasize the basics, especially reading skills. Both rated reading ability as of the same or greater improtance than subject knowledge. Both current principals are concerned with lowering the failure rates of students, but at Hubbard, the new principal has had many conflicts with teachers over this issue. He wants grading practices within departments to be standardized and failure rates to be lowered. Some teachers do not want to "lower their standards." Both Washington and Hubbard students are demoted in the junior year. Starting this year, Hubbard students may also be demoted in the sophomore year. Before the new principal, there was no demotion system at Hubbard. There is no difference in the level of expectation which teachers have for their students at the two schools. Teachers at both schools said that students were not as prepared for high school work as they used to be. They also viewed the students as being less motivated and interested in learning than in the past. At both schools, a majority of teachers interviewed believed that their students would get jobs after they graduated. A smaller group of teachers believed that the students would attend college or technical/business school.

VIII. CURRICULUM

There are more Advanced Placement classes but fewer honors classes offered at Washington than at Hubbard. Both schools offer support and other enrichment classes for students whose math or reading skills are deficient. The majority of students at each school are in regular level courses.

Hubbard has more Options for Knowledge programs than Washington. All but one of these options programs was created by the new principal. Washington has been adopted by a government agency. Both schools have a large number of work-study programs. At both schools, but perhaps especially at Washington, the vocational or skills-oriented programs (excluding business) were viewed as "dumping grounds" for behavioral problems and students at-risk of dropping out.

Curriculum offerings are quite similar. Some differences include the following: Washington has heating and air conditioning and home economics/nursing classes while Hubbard has ROTC.

IX. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Both administrations have explicit programs in the treatment of multiple failures, absenteeism, and behavioral problems. Each school has a new dropout prevention program aimed at improving grades, attendance, and behavior. The directors of each program say that there are already noticeable improvements. Hubbard's program includes more students but seems to have less counseling. In both programs, incentives are offered for improved attendance.

In addition, Washington has a general attendance contest in which prizes like bicycles and radios are awarded for perfect attendance. Hubbard currrently has no general attendance contest. The principal would like to do more in this area.

Both schools have in-school suspension rooms. Cutting is the most frequently punished offense. A three day in-school suspension seems to be the average length at Washington, while one day is the average at Hubbard. Both schools prefer to use in-school suspension over out-of-school suspension. At Hubbard, an average of twenty students a day are in the in-school suspension room and about two a day are suspended from school. At Washington, the averages are lower: about eight to ten a day in the in-school room and about one a day suspended from school.

X. CHANGE AND STABILITY

The change mentioned most frequently by teachers at both schools was the change in student body. Integration has altered the racial composition of the student body significantly. At both schools, also, teachers said that students were less prepared and less motivated than was the case in the past. The second most frequently noted change in both schools was the change in administrative policies and procedures which accompanied the change in principals. At Washington, teachers referred to a less recent change from stricter and more consistent enforcement of discipline to more lenient and less consistent enforcement. The changes at Hubbard are fairly recent since the new principal came just two years ago. Among specific changes highlighted at Hubbard are stricter supervision of teachers resulting in a reduction of teacher autonomy, a stricter and more authoritarian principal, more rigorous recruiting efforts, attempts to standardize instruction, increase in conflict with the administration, and drastic teacher attrition.

WILLIAM H. WELLS ACADEMY

AND

JAMES H. BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL

WILLIAM H. WELLS ACADEMY

I. THE COMMUNITY

Wells Academy (formerly called Wells High School) is located in a mixed residential and commercial area with an industrial district along its eastern border which follows the banks of the Chicago River. The school is two miles northwest of Chicago's Loop, less than 10 minutes away by rapid transit. The school stands on the corner of Ashland Avenue and Augusta Boulevard.

Closely spaced apartment units, two-to four-flats and some larger apartment buildings, predominate. Most of the buildings are on long, narrow lots and have very little space between them. Some units have older frame homes dating from the turn of the century, homes that were moved to the rear of the lots to make room for the newer brick structures.

The population of the entire community is about 100,000. The 1980 Census reported the number as 96,428, a drop from 124,000 in 1970. The early settlers in the area, Germans and Scandinavians, established the pattern of settling in the community and subsequently moving out as they established themselves economically and sought better housing and living conditions in other communities. The most notable immigrants to the West Town community were of Eastern European stock -- Poles, Ukrainians and Russian Jews. The Polish population was by far the largest; a popular saying is that it exceeded that of Warsaw, Poland during its peak period. The Poles established their presence with newspapers (the nation's largest Polish newspaper is published here), churches, a Polish museum (with holdings of Chopin's original manuscripts) and a variety of retail businesses catering to Polish needs -- bakeries, sausage shops and herb retailers.

The Italian community in the Grand and Clybourn area near Santa Maria Addolorata Catholic Church has played an important role in the community. The church and the Near Northwest Civic Committee retain an active interest in Wells Academy.

The West Town community has undergone racial changes similar to that of the South Chicago community. From 1960 to 1980 the population changed from 93% white to 55% Hispanic. Two thirds of the blocks in the community are almost entirely occupied by Hispanics. This area was the port of entry for Puerto Ricans as it contained abundant low-cost housing, Catholic churches and job openings. The industrial corridor needed factory hands as experienced workers were promoted to higher positions or left the factory floor. Industry was a mixture of light packaging, finishing and manufacturing, including bakeries, breweries, tanneries, meat packers and manufacturers of precision tools. Reductions in the number of workers in some plants and the closing of others has created hardships for the new settlers in the area. The central city district, which can be seen in the distance with its tall buildings such as the Hancock and Sears Towers, is unable to absorb all the potential workers.

The retail strips along Milwaukee Avenue, Ashland Avenue, Division Street and Chicago Avenue contain a blend of two cultures -- Hispanic and Polish. One area caters to Ukranians alone and is visited by locals and outsiders. Steambath houses attract Chicagoans from all over the city to its famous Russian baths. Banks, restaurants, and retailers do a fair amount of daily walk-in business. In the strip nearest the high school, sidewalks are crumbling making walking hazardous to shoppers. Litter, debris, shattered glass and graffiti are to be found everywhere. As in South Chicago, city services are poor here. Less attention is paid to cleaning up by the newer residents than previously. Twenty years ago residents were often seen scrubbing their sidewalks, shop windows and front porches hours before shoppers arrived. The development of the West Town Shopping Center has provided an alternative to the deteriorating shops in West Town. It also serves as an important source of jobs for Wells students.

The total number of people living below the poverty level in 1980 was reported at 27%, with some Hispanic areas having an excess of 50% of the people living below the poverty level. Wells Academy was reported as having 53.6% of its students living below poverty levels.

II. EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

Wells was built in 1935 (just over 50 years ago) in a little over a square block of land. The U-shaped building has a small plot of landscaped frontage rimmed with a tall iron picket fence. The front area gets very little sun and is not able to grow a strong lawn, but tall trees dot the entry, softening the stark industrial looking facility. The dark brown painted metal doors at the end of the front walk are the main entrance to the school. Visitors and most students enter through these doors. Students coming for breakfast enter through the southwest patio doors. Teachers and those coming for club meetings enter by the northwest doors. The rear of the school has been paved into a large patio with raised planter beds that make the area unsuitable for sports practice. Behind the patio a small staff parking lot, filled to capacity, is inadequate in size for Wells' commuting staff.

The front of the school faces Ashland Avenue. The front sidewalk, approximately eight feet wide, is the only space the students have to stand while they wait for the school doors to open. Across the street small retail stores are open to serve the immediate community. Most students walk to school, passing along Ashland Avenue where the sidewalks are in poor repair. In ordinary weather the holes and cracks can be avoided, but when snow piles up they must go out into the street to get around the danger.

III. PHYSICAL PLANT: INTERIOR

The four story building contains many of the original fixtures and equipment -- lighting fixtures, bolted-down desks and glazed tiled walls. Although very little modernization of the facility has taken place, it is maintained in fairly good condition. During the period of the study new wiring was being installed to accommodate the higher voltage needed to run computers that were coming to the school in the near future.

The school has approximately 50 classrooms, laboratories, gymnasia (two, in very run down conditions), one pool (very darkly lit), an auditorium, administrative and counseling offices, and one wood shop. A planned three million dollar rehabilitation of the building was slated to begin in the Fall of 1986. As the school is very compact, every inch of space is at a premium and is utilized. On the first floor are the administrative office, counseling office, lunchrooms, attendance headquarters, disciplinary office, library, two teachers' lounges, the engineering plant and some classrooms. A crammed, efficient atmosphere prevails. The majority of the classrooms are housed on the second, third and fourth floors. As one ascends upward the halls become dimmer, and the school's population thins out.

The bulk of the student population uses the first and second floors extensively for classrooms and locker assignments. Lockers are a nondescript color on the outside, but inside the students have decorated them with mirrors, contact paper and colorful posters. Graffiti is seen here and there on the walls, put there mainly by the adult population that uses the school during evening school hours. (There is less security during these hours.) There is some litter; however, the halls are generally kept clean, and the floors are polished to a high glossy finish throughout the school.

The first floor houses the main lunchroom and a small, narrow teachers' dining area, the two separated by a large kitchen in the center. The main lunchroom is kept fairly clean, although the windows have a dull, smoky appearance in part because of the iron grating and in part because they cannot be washed on the outside. The food, cooked in the kitchen and kept hot on steam tables, could be judged as unsatisfactory: pancake stacks were burned and served cold; pizza slices were served for breakfast; and scrambled eggs had an excessive amount of watery liquid in the pan. The teachers' food service offered a slightly better array of food, but served previously cooked eggs, barely warm, from brown paper toweling. The main hall leading to the lunchroom became tightly packed while students lined up before they entered to select their food. Noise levels were kept at a minimum during the waiting period, but rose once students entered the dining area. Teachers who monitored the dining room kept a close watch on the students as food fights and "gang bangs" (gang altercations) did erupt from time to time. When the staff would hear of possible trouble, extra teachers were sent into the room to mediate and control the violence.

The second floor traffic flow is such that the majority of students regularly crossed the central junction during the day. It was the place at which student fights were most likely to occur. Several outbursts broke out during the observation period; teachers were extremely apologetic, worried that a wrong impression would result. All confrontations were quickly subdued; the instigators were taken to the disciplinary offices. One male student was once seen being led out of the school in handcuffs, smiling at everyone.

IV. STUDENT BODY

In October 1985, 1,586 students were enrolled at Wells Academy. Boys outnumbered girls 817 to 769. The student body was 71.6% Hispanic, equally divided between those of Mexican and those of Puerto Rican origin. The remainder of the student population was 16.1% black and 6.9% white with a few Asians and Haitians. Forty-nine special education students were enrolled (11 white, 16 black and 22 Hispanic). There were 579 freshmen, 307 sophomores, 421 juniors, 230 seniors and 49 special education students.

Wells' enrollment declined from a high of 1,750 in 1979 to 1,503 in 1984. Since then the enrollment is increasing due to an influx of Mexicans (both legal citizens and undocumented workers) coming from the crowded communities of Pilsen and Little Village, Central Americans (Salvadorans, Nicaruaguans, Guatemalans), and Haitians. According to a study published in April of 1986, the West Town community, where Wells Academy is located, had a median family income of $14,222, making it sixty-second out of 77 Chicago communities in income. A high percentage of students, 52.7%, were classified as low income.

Under its new status as academy rather than general high school, Wells will serve more than the immediate neighborhood. With the computer assisted classes that should be in operation in the fall of 1986, students from a wider area can be enrolled. The staff at Wells was hoping to attract highly motivated, high scoring students to the school.

Wells' school day began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. Additional school activities expanded the school day from 7:00 until 4:30. Of the 20 students interviewed at Wells, four or 20% were taking 320 minutes of coursework each day; six were enrolled in seven classes (280 minutes of instruction a day); six were taking five courses (240 minutes); and four (all work study or special ed students) were enrolled in only four courses. A higher percentage of students were taking seven or more courses at Wells than at any of the other schools in the study with the exception of the vocational schools.

As a regular high school Wells offered the required courses in English, science, math and social studies; there were few honors or advanced placement sections, however. Due to small enrollments in food classes, there were plans to eliminate them and convert the room into computer classrooms for the 1986-87 school year. Indeed, computer and business courses appeared to have the most enthusiastic students. These courses were perceived to have practical value. While observing in the computer room, the ethnographer noted students very intent upon their tasks. Job training provided an important impetus for these students to stay in school. Those who were academically inclined were served less well at Wells than at Bowen, with its greater variety of honors and enrichment courses.

Wells had a number of special programs including bilingual and learning disabilities programs and a dropout prevention program (VEDORPP). The Dropout Retrieval Program (CARE) for District 31, serving students from the entire North side is also housed at Wells. Additional guidance and counseling services were provided by outside agencies including Network for Youth Services, Erie House, Northwest Settlement House, Near Northwest Civic Committee, Cycle of Friends and the Northern Trust Bank. Wells students could participate in ten workstudy programs and two tutorial programs which utilized peer tutors, neighborhood residents and bank volunteers.

The cumulative dropout rate for Wells' class of 1982, as reported by The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, was 56%. Along with that at DuSable (58%), the dropout rate at Wells ranked as the highest of the eight schools in the present study. Twelve percent of Wells' students were classified as having limited English skills.

TAP (Test for Academic Progress) scores for Wells students ranged between the twenty-first and twenty-fifth percentiles between 1982 and 1986 with an occasional class ranking in the 29 percentile range.

In the Spring of 1986, 63% of the freshmen and 53% of the sophomores at Wells failed one or more classes. Figures were slightly higher in January of 1986. The failure rates at Wells were slightly lower than at Bowen.

The students at Wells appeared to be well dressed and groomed. Even at the poverty level they took great pride in their appearances and came to school tastefully dressed. The boys wore tops and jeans; some wore large necklaces with crucifixes. Many carried a hairbursh in their back pockets to brush their hair in a uniform style. Girls wore up to date fashions: stirrup pants, designer jeans, and large tops with designs. Some girls wore their hair long, either straight or braided. Most had shoulder length waved hair.

Boys and girls at Bowen openly displayed their affection in the halls and at their lockers, especially the older students. The younger boys and girls appeared to be more solitary or shy. A number of pregnant girls were seen at this school.

Hispanics and blacks separated themselves in the halls and around their lockers. Lockers were the favored place for informal interaction, meetings and perhaps gang related activity. There was less segregation in the lunchroom; girls clustered together by race, but sat anywhere. There was a tendency to see more boys at the back of the room where the fighters had more room. Teachers were assigned lunchroom duty permanently; during the observation period one disturbance was prevented by alert staff: principal, assistant principals and security guards were all watchful and prepared.

Only one boy admitted belonging to a gang. According to him gangs were where one found a place and where long term friendships were established. The association with the gang was not perceived as having a negative influence in his life. Belonging to a gang appeared to be by choice. No one at Wells complained of being shaken down for money, forced to join a gang or forced to buy drugs. Each ethnic group had its own federation (Kings or Disciples) and competing cliques within it. Domination by one gang over the community surrounding Wells was mentioned by the principal as a possible reason some students would not come to Wells. Girls were more likely to take the risk of crossing the lines of demarcation. Still, girls were considered vulnerable away from their home territory. Steps have been taken at Wells to keep gang violence out of the school, including instituting closed campus four years ago and increasing security. However, what occurs outside does affect the student body.

Girls at Wells complained of having their privacy invaded by bathrooms with no doors and co-ed swimming. Particularly upsetting to Hispanic girls was the fact that they were required to report to swimming during their periods and sit on a bench in full view of the boys. In contrast, Bowen High School managed to satisfy the requirements of the law without having to force boys and girls to swim together.

Student extracurricular activities included 20 odd clubs and organizations as well as basketball, volleyball, softball and track and field for girls and basketball, baseball and soccer for boys. No estimates were given on the number of students involved. Wells is very proud of its boys involved in amateur boxing competitions, some of whom have won state-wide recognition for their boxing skills. Wells' music department and R.O.T.C. have also gained recognition in competitions (city and state) as outstanding performers. Students at Wells wholeheartedly competed in the regional Academic Olympics. However, the school may be more quickly eliminated from this academic exercise when the academies, magnet schools and technical schools are allowed to enter into the competition against regular high school students as was recently decided by the Board of Education.

V. FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

The principal at Wells came to the school from Sullivan High School in 1979. Since that time he has managed the school with a firm hand, creating a closed campus ("not preferred, but a reality"), and playing a major role in maintaining discipline. He was highly visible and acted as mediator between teachers, students, parents and the community. He was aware that students were arriving with low skills ("they could perform better"), but believed that ability had dropped only slightly. He noted that Wells loses the best students to special schools.

According to the first principal at Wells in his book, the dropout rate at Wells has historically been 50% since the school was built. Today, students are less motivated to work hard in school if there are no rewards such as jobs for their efforts. He felt that lack of motivation is a national problem and that lack of jobs is a contributing factor. Jobs help instill the feeling of success which "breeds more success." Additionally, new program requirements will contribute to the dropout problem, he stated. Pre-algebra and English with support no longer provide credits towards graduation. This problem is compounded by program requirements for students in the ESL (English as a Second Language) department. The principal believed that high school will be extended for one more year for many students at Wells. Turning Wells into a college preparatory school (under Rennaissance requirements) will likely exacerbate the existing dropout problems in the future.

Wells reported 89 staff positions: the principal, three assistant principals, four counselors, two librarians and 79 teachers. In addition there were six teacher aides, one library aide, the chief engineer, four special education teachers and career service staff employees (clerks and secretaries). A nurse served Wells and another school. Eighty-five percent of the faculty at Wells was tenured ("an older faculty") with 16 teachers not assigned under rules of the contract. The principal designated several of his "best" teachers to design the new programs coming to Wells with computers to assist instruction. Of the 20 teachers interviewed, four had served at no other school; three transferred from schools in Puerto Rico, and the remainder came to Wells from other Chicago high schools. Most of the teachers received their educational training in Illinois colleges and universities; three were trained at the University of Puerto Rico. Eight teachers had earned advanced degrees. Fifty- six percent of the faculty at Wells was white; 23% was black; 17% was Hispanic; and there was one Asian.

Teachers taught five classes per day, were allowed two periods for preparation (called C and P) and had one period of school duty such as hall guard, study hall monitor or administrative duties. In addition, each teacher was assigned a division. Department chairs served as division teachers. In March 1986 there were 21 freshmen divisions (including one for EMH and one for VEDORP), eleven sophomore divisions (including one each for EMH and LD), 13 junior divisions (including one EMH and one VEDORP), and nine senior divisions (including one each for LD and EMH). There did not appear to be separate divisions for demoted students. Department chairs were also required to supervise halls during one period; tutorial staff were assigned hall duty posts for one period. During the period of the study a new emphasis was put on hall discipline. Teachers began actively sweeping students into classrooms quickly and efficiently. Tardiness was reduced dramatically. However, teachers often arrived at their hall duty posts punctually only to find that their station had no chair for them to use.

Wells' police officer, administrators, one teacher and security monitor trainees used walkie talkies to communicate with each other and the principal. These radios were very obvious and gave the apearance of tight security. "I've never been in a school with so many policemen," remarked a substitute who had been to almost every high school on the north side of Chicago. There was no intercom system at the school.

According to ten teachers interviewed, morale at Wells was average. Three judged it to be excellent; two felt morale was poor; and two responded that morale fluctuated up and down. Three refused to respond to the question.

When asked "What was it like when you first came here as a teacher?" Wells teachers spoke of the staff as: "a distinguished staff," "I was impressed with the open, friendly and helpful staff and administration," and "I felt amongst my peers; the staff was terrific." Comments concerning the student body included "hectic negative behaviors, shocking at first," "the chaotic ethnic gangs and the bilingual situation." Newer teachers found the school's student body "wonderful, totally different than what had been rumored about the school." One said, "I was surprised at how terrific the students were." Finally, one commented on "how old the school looked, so beaten down."

Senior teachers at Wells overwhelmingly applauded the principal's leadership and his firm commitment to making the school safe and secure. Violence and gang problems in the early 1980s were reported as severe at this school.

Teachers voiced their frustration about students, equally dividing their opinions. Ten expressed concern about students not interested in their education, about ability going to waste, the dropout problems, low grades, poor skills, cutting, student motivation, and students unable to go to college for economic reasons. Others voiced their frustration about the problems students had to endure in their homes (low incomes, uncaring parents, undervaluation of education). Several teachers were also distressed because their colleagues seemed to have stopped trying and lost their dedication. Teachers felt more of their students were arriving poorly prepared to do high school work. Seventeen of 20 teachers interviewed claimed a high percentage of students unable to do the work required of them in high school.

Cutting was a problem at Wells made worse by the fact that the school did not have enough telephones for staff to use to call parents. Unlike most of the other schools in the study, it had no telecomputer. Teachers and counselors were not able to reach students' homes as readily as at other schools, compounding the cutting problem. Although Wells had a closed campus, in effect it meant only that students could not enter the school without their I.D.'s. Students had all learned how to leave by the many unsecured doors. One assistant principal at Wells considered the "unguarded doors" a major problem; there were seven in the school.

VI. FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION INTERACTION

Wells' principal, while not expressing lofty goals about parent involvement, community support, or commitment to excellence, was widely credited by staff with turning the school around from a chaotic, gang-controlled institution to one that was more protective of all attending it. Sixty percent of the teachers interviewed said they had a friendly and informal working relationship with the principal. Another 15%, citing a strained working relationship, preferred to minimize contact with the principal. Forty percent of the teachers interviewed viewed their principal's management style as a combination of delegating authority, soliciting staff opinions and maintaining control in his own hands. A quarter of them thought he solicited staff opinions but ultimately made the decisions. One suggested that none of the categories fit his style of leadership. The ethnographer's observation was that management at Wells Academy was centralized with little input from teachers and staff.

On his part, the principal recognized that he did not have autonomy in selecting his staff and that he had to work with the teachers assigned by the Board. He stated that there have been major disagreements between his administration and the faculty over such issues as "whole-hearted support" and "changing teacher and student attitudes around."

VII. FACULTY AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS

The sample of 20 classroom observations revealed that lectures and question and answer discussions were the most commonly used teaching methods at Wells. Students appeared to be more reluctant to participate in discussions than those at Bowen. Only 25% of Wells' observed classes were judged as having a positive discussion session. Instructors at Wells received little feedback during question and answer sessions. In two classrooms girls who answered correctly more than two times in a row received moans from their fellow clasmates.

At Wells, most students behaved well during class, although in two of the 20 observed classrooms students became disruptive just before the bell. Both teachers were upset over the behavior; one suggested the ethnographer's presence elicited the "showing off."

During the second week into the study the principal at Wells instituted a new policy and procedures to cut down on cutting and tardiness and to improve discipline in the halls. This was part of a program which enabled the school to staff the attendance office and hire an additional assistant principal to oversee attendance. Teachers organized into "sweep teams" herded students out of the halls and into class on time. Before these new procedures went into effect, students entered late in all six classrooms observed by the ethnographer. A marked improvement in hall discipline was noted after the procedural changes as well. Nevertheless, in only 15% of the observed classrooms at Wells was there perfect student attendance. Only half of the interviewed teachers at Wells said they had low absence rates in their classes. In another recent change (January 1986) one of staff members was promoted to the position of assistant principal in charge of attendance. Under the leadership of this office efforts promoting "perfect attendance day" were beginning to show some results by the end of the study.

According to the students interviewed at Wells, the worst teachers have "bad attitudes towards kids," "put kids down and make a fool out of kids," "do not explain," give too much homework overnight," and "do not understand kids." Five students (25%) said that they liked all of their teachers. Wells students reported their favorite classes to be math (four mentions), English (three mentions), and computers (two mentions). Three students had no favorite class. The teacher was almost always the reason students offered for liking a class. Only one student said it was the subject. When asked whether they ever cut

classes, ten (50%) of Wells students said that they never did; two responded that they "used to." Eight admitted that they had cut classes. Reasons offered included "not ready for tests" (three responses), "work not finished" (three responses) and "to be with friends," "bored," "tired," and "want to be outside." One student said he cut classes to avoid gang trouble.
When Wells students came to school, they were easier to locate than students at Bowen.

VIII. STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON DROPPING OUT

Half of the teachers interviewed considered the dropout problem to be serious at Wells; an additional 25% said the problem was "very serious." Two new teachers said they did not know and the others did not think it was a major problem. Teachers attributed the high dropout rate to the home and family, saying that there was no support for education in the home. Some cited the economic problem families were facing; one stated "the family is in chaos." "Failure," "despair" and "poor skills" ranked second as reasons given for students dropping out. Several also believed students dropped out because they needed a job. Gangs and "school is meaningless to them" also received mention.

Students said that failing, needing to work, gangs and pregnancy were the main reasons students dropped out of school. One felt teachers were responsible for some failures because "they like to put kids down too much." They also mentioned boredom, drugs and needing to care for children at home. As one stated, "school is not possible for some who are needed at home or have to work to help out the family." Other reasons mentioned included "not learning anything," "don't like to study," and "hanging around the wrong crowd."

When asked if gangs attend their school, fifteen students responded that they did; three said "no," and two did not know. Asked if gang members made a difference in the school, 15 replied "no" and five said "yes." Some students commented that gangs do not bother those who are not already involved or that their presence only made a difference to new students. One said it was "hard because of the dress code; you always have to watch what color clothes to buy and what to wear."

When asked to judge the safety of their school, Wells students were divided down the middle between perceiving the school as very safe and only somewhat safe. The most dangerous places were said to be the north stairwells, the locker rooms, the lunch room, and the bathrooms. Although a staff member was assigned to the northeast stairwell in the mornings, the ethnographer did not find this areas to be adequately patrolled during the four weeks of the study. Students left by this exit and also let others into the school through this door.

JAMES H. BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL

I. THE COMMUNITY

Bowen High School is located in the South Chicago Community area, approximately twelve miles south and east of Chicago's Loop. The school is situated in the western quarter of the community at 8900 South between Marquette and Burnham Avenues. Students are drawn primarily from this community, although the school also serves sections of Avalon Park, a community west of South Chicago Avenue commonly called "Pill Hill," and South Deering and Jeffery Manor to the south. These distinct community areas grew up around South Chicago's U.S. Steel South Works Plant and other steel industries in the Calumet basin.

Housing in South Chicago proper was erected to accommodate the growing demand for workers at the steel mill; by 1930 every available parcel of land was occupied. Houses, built on narrow lots, were practical and simple. Most of the area contains a mixture of single family dwellings and two and three-flat units. Many of the original homes remain and are occupied by new ethnic groups. As in the past, neatly maintained houses are largely "owner occupied."

The original immigrants that clustered around the mill gates were Irish, German and Swedish. This group was gradually replaced by Polish, Croatian, Serbian, Hungarian and Bohemian workers. Around World War I Hispanics and blacks began to migrate into the community, eventually replacing the older Slavic residents. As of 1980, the population was 39% Hispanic, 48% Black and the remainder White ethnic.

The community, so dependent upon the steel industry for its major source of income, has suffered economically since the closing of the biggest mills in 1980. In 1970, 9.7% of the residents were recorded as unemployed; by 1980 the figure rose to 11.5%. Several census tracts in South Chicago had over 25% living below the poverty level in 1980. South Chicago residents showed a median income of $22,722 per family; the community ranked 35th out of 77 in Chicago. Bowen reported 46.3% of its students from low income families.

The residents of South Chicago are served by a small retail business district along Commercial Avenue and 91st Street. Signs of the economic hardship could be seen in the widespread closings of businesses; those remaining had few walk-in patrons. All business establishments had iron gates to secure their property from theft. Most of the area also showed signs of neglect by public services. Front sidewalks weee collapsing; litter and broken glass was everwhere. The colorful graffiti removed the eye from the street trash. The few banks on the commercial strip, the library, the YMCA, a few churches, the high school and Bessemer Park appeared to be the most stable elements in the community.

II. BOWEN: EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

Bowen High School, a colossal structure built in 1908 of brown Chicago brick, has a central core five stories high. The main entrance is flanked by sweeping columns. The building, shaped like an "H," has four story wings on each side of the distinctive, peaked roof central section. Bowen's twin, Shurz High School, was designated a Chicago landmark for its unique architecture. Indeed, the design and the iron picket fence surrounding the front landscaped lawn gives the school that special "prairie yesteryear" appearance.

Attached to the main building is the new Annex built in 1969 to accommodate a growing school population. This two story, modern red brick, square building with glass window walls provides a contrast in styles to the older main structure. Before the construction of this annex, Bowen's students had been housed in mobile classrooms behind the school and in some scattered branch classrooms. During this peak period, Bowen's enrollment reached nearly 4,000, double that reported in March 1986 of 1,969 students. The annex is attached to the main building by a breezeway which is the main student entry to the school.

The front lawns of both buildings are off-limits to the students. A marquee donated to the school by past graduates prominently displays the school logo, a strong male boiler maker. The bulletins on the marquee announce school events while graffiti on the front sidewalk announces gang messages.

Across the street a substantial parcel of park land is used by the school for sports practice. Bessemer Park is also used by the students before and after school to smoke cigarettes, "get high," or just hang out. The park is equipped with a bath house, swimming pool, baseball diamonds and ball courts. The school and the park together, essentially the largest open spaces in South Chicago, make a spacious campus for students.

Except for South Shore, a very middle-class community, most new construction is located in the "Pill Hill," Jeffery Manor and South Deering communities. These newer and very attractive areas are separated by a railroad embankment, the Skykway, and an industrial strip. This strong barrier confines South Chicago community residents to their quarter. A commuter train serves the area, otherwise public transportation to the central city is difficult.

III. INTERIOR APPEARANCE

In the main building and new annex together, there are about 90 classrooms, laboratories, auditoriums and administrative offices. Only the first four floors of the main buillding are used daily. The fifth floor is used only for mass testings. The main office on the first floor has an open and friendly atmosphere and staff, while across the hall an enclosed disciplinary office strikes a more sombre mood. The Chicago Police Department has quarters next to the disciplinary officer, an assistant principal. The counseling office occupies dark, cramped quarters, while the Youth Council space opposite is bright and sunny.

The main hallway, painted a pale blue and fitted with modern lighting was lined with student lockers in good condition, some decorated with ribbons, streamers and birthday messages. A large diorama displayed various objects. During the Spring of 1986, year book photos and Hispanic cultural items were featured.

Also housed on the first floor of the main building are the student and teacher dining rooms. Lined with glazed tiles, the student lunch room bounced voices and other noise at an alarming volume during lunch hours. The student eating area consisted of a canteen and the regular large dining room. Both rooms were kept fairly clean and neat, with a minimal amount of food dropped on seats and flooring, and an absence of stale food odors. The hallway leading to the student dining room (and to the gym, pool, auto shop, kitchen delivery and storage) is narrow and became seriously congested during lunch hours.

On the second floor the appearance of order begins to disappear. Stairwells leading to the second floor were missing hand rails; walls were smeared with a variety of substances (dried blood from previous fights, attempts at scribbling); and litter began to accummulate. The hall lockers showed more damage as one progresses up to the top floors: doors are bent; some were off of their hinges; and a few were charred. Lighting became hazier and duller. Some hallways had large plaster chunks gouged out.

The new annex had bright, large classrooms (all neat and clean), and bright hallways. There was a minimal amount of litter and graffiti in this building; most of the scribblings were confined to the rear stairwells between floors. The annex houses offices for the English, Foreign Language, Math and Social Studies departments, and a music practice room. Administrative offices for the programmer and assistant principal for the annex building, as well as a new counseling unit established in March 1986, were also located here.

Entry into the annex is through the breeezeway doors. This is the main student entryway. Large silver painted doors line the breezeway, front and back, and open from the inside only. Teachers diligently monitored the entrance during the morning hours. A certain number of students were allowed to come into the breezeway and wait until the bell rings, especially during bad weather. Otherwise they must stay outdoors. The two entrances generally had a cluster of students that prefered to wait outside until the doors were swung open. Others begin to pound on the steel doors until someone admitted them. The pounding could be heard all day long. Graffiti was present on both sides of the school. However, while it was at a tolerable level in the front, it was unsightly in the back. Attempts to remove the markings left smears on the surfaces.

The two story media center is located in the annex building. The main entrance to the library is on the main floor. Students were not supposed to use doors on the second floor to enter the media center, but some did. The library had over 20,000 volumes, study carrels, large study tables, and comfortable seating all around. Books were displayed in their windows; during March 1986 Black History readings were attractively displayed. Students used the library for doing homework and class assignments; very few checked out books for home reading.

A large room on the first floor served as the Bilingual center for both Hispanic and Haitian students. They were grouped together without sound screens and without proper separation of the two units. Directly above this center on the second floor were two large study halls -- ill-kept rooms, excessively marked with graffiti on the walls. Student seats were scattered about. "Care less" seemed to apply to both these two areas: study hall and bilingual center.

During spring break vandals entered the school and set fire to one of the conference rooms. Renovation had begun on the burned room and included building a new book room immediately above the first floor.

IV. STUDENT BODY

In October 1985, 2,068 students were enrolled at Bowen, approximately half boys and half girls. Hispanics and Blacks attended in equal numbers, forming the largest minorities. As of October 1985 there were 1035 Hispanics (972 Mexican and 63 Puerto Rican), 985 Blacks, 31 Haitians, 16 Whites and one Asian. These figures included Bowen's 155 Special Education students (109 Black, 45 Hispanic and 1 White). There were 742 students in Grade 9, 514 in Grade 10, 293 in Grade 11, and 364 in Grade 12. The student population has been declining at a slow pace since 1979 when 2,905 students were enrolled. The attrition is the result of both the steel mill closing, which layed off workers and forced families to relocate, and city and nationwide demographic changes.

Essentially a neighborhood school, Bowen probably loses some students from the community who elect to attend Jones Commercial High School, Chicago Vocational School, Lindblom Technical School, and Morgan Park and Washington High Schools. Outstanding students may travel to Kenwood Academy. Bowen was "holding its own," according to one assistant principal, since very few students want to risk going to a distant school and suffer problems getting to and from their homes during the winter.

The official Board of Education dropout rate (on an annualized basis) at Bowen for the year 1984-85 was 9.5%, an increase over the previous year's 6.7%. The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance found the cummulative dropout rate for Bowen longitudinally to be 48% for the class of 1982.

Tests for Academic Progress (TAP) showed Bowen ninth graders in 1982 reading in the 23rd percentile. Math scores for this class were also in the 23rd percentile. While the scores of this and subsequent classes moved up or down a few percentage points, in general Bowen students have scored in the 25th percentile or less in reading and math since 1982.

Board of Education figures show that 68% of Bowen students had one or more failures during the Spring term of 1986. As at most high schools, failure rates were lower at the end of the semesters than during the spring and fall interim marking periods. Nevertheless, the pattern of failures appeared to be similar throughout most grading periods. Freshmen and sophomores received the highest number of failures in each marking period report. With about 75% of freshmen and sophomores receiving one or more failing marks in the Spring of 1986, Bowen appeared to give an extraordinary amount of "negative reinforcement" to underclassmen. These students, already reported to be suffering from poor quality education or lack of preparation to do high school work, were not receiving incentives for success.

Students at Bowen were a friendly group. Most dressed conservatively in plain pants (black jeans were favored among boys) and tops. Many boys wore "Miami Vice" outfits. Girls wore large tops with splashed designs. Girls sometimes came to school dressed up on low heels, nylons and dresses; no boy was seen with a shirt and tie during the observation. There were no punk or heavy metal styles among any of the students' attire. Gang colors and emblems were forbidden; when caught students were sent home to change (right down to their shoelaces).

When asked if gangs attended their school, all but one Bowen student interviewed responded "yes." Another said he did not know. Half of the students said that gang members attending the school made a difference in their lives at school. "Get the gangs out of the school" was a recurring response because "most aren't interested in school anyway, and all they do is disrupt classes." Some students felt the school made it too easy for gang members to enroll.

Most students considered Bowen to be somewhat safe (nine of 20 students interviewed) or very safe (seven); two, however, considered it to be not safe at all. The breezeway was cited as being unsafe by three students because there were "too many fights there." Study hall received two mentions as unsafe, and the lunch line and the locker rooms got one unsafe vote apiece from students. An unsafe place "has no guard," remarked one student.

Hispanic students tended to cluster among themselves in halls, in the lunch room and around lockers. While there was some intermingling of racial groups in the lunch room, the patterns of separate tables was evident. Boys moved to the back of the lunch room and commandeered whole tables for their friends. Girls sat by themselves, ate, talked or did homework together in the noisy atmosphere. During the four week observation period there were no disturbances in the lunch room. It was reported that the first lunch period was the most likely to have food fights. The principal and assistant principal served as monitors during this period; their presence usually but not always moderated student behavior during this period. One person was chosen from each table to bus all the trays to the kitchen. Naturally no one wanted to do this clean- up chore, especially boys who saw this as a girl's work at best and a job for low castes at worst.

V. STUDENT SCHEDULES

Bowen is a general high school offering college preparatory courses that lead to a general diploma. Vocational course offerings were limited to auto shop, metal shop, and print and wood shops. The administration used study halls to bring students' schedules to the state requirement of 300 minutes of instructional time per day. Bowen reportd over 700 students scheduled into the dummy "500" study hall. Of the 20 students interviewed at Bowen four were taking eight courses, giving them 320 minutes of coursework; four were taking seven courses (240 minutes) plus a study hall "500;" eleven were scheduled for six courses (240 minutes) with two study hall periods in Room 500; one student was taking only 200 minutes, but the rest of the time was filled by work study. Bowen's school day began at 7:45 and ended at 2:31.

Bowen had over 27 student clubs and associations, plus an active sports program. The soccer teams have won several trophies and state-wide awards. The mathematics club has returned with high honors in state-wide competitions. The administration could not offer the exact number of students involved in clubs and organizations, but the consensus of opinion among teachers was that there were fewer participants in club activities over the past several years. Of the students interviewed, ten reported being involved in sports activities and were on teams. Ten said they were not members of any clubs. When asked about school spirit, six replied that there was a lot of school spirit; eleven said there was some; and three believed students had no school spirit. The principal stated the reason for his commitment to a wide variety of extra-curricular activities for students as, "It is very important in a student's life."

VI. FACULTY

Bowen had 97 quota teachers, five counselors, two librarians, eight bilingual staff positions, 19 career service staff employees (aides, clerks, secretaries), plus 12 special education teachers. Administrative personnel included the principal, three assistant principals, one administrative assistant, a programmer and the school engineer. In addition to the regular teachers, approximately ten full time substitutes were available every day. The racial and ethnic survey taken in October 1985 showed Whites composed 44% of the staff; Blacks 46%, Hispanics 8% and Asians less than 1%.

The faculty at Bowen was stable and had more training than the minimum required. The principal reported 95% of the teaching staff to be tenured. Of the 20 teachers interviewed, 14 had served at Bowen for 15 to 20 years. Five had been at the school for five to ten years and one was a first year teacher. Three of the interviewed teachers had taught at no other school; 12 had been transferred from other high schools in Chicago; and two came to Bowen after the closing of the old Englewood High School. The majority of the teachers received their training in education in Illinois colleges and universities, four of them at Chicago State. Almost half (nine) of those interviewed had Masters degrees in their fields.

At the beginning of the study in March 1986, there were 81 divisions at Bowen -- 29 freshmen, 24 sophomore, 13 junior, and 15 senior. Division rooms had distinct populations: English as a Second Language, Principal's Scholars, EMH, regular, and demoted students. The special education and visually impaired students had their own separate divisons as well. All teachers except departmental chairs were assigned a division.

Teachers normally taught five classes a day. In addition they were allowed two periods for administrative duties and preparation time (A and P) and assigned one period as hall monitor, lunchroom or locker room guard, study hall teacher or bookroom supervisor. The tutorial staff in English and math were not assigned any duties other than to be available to assist students the entire day. The majority of teachers had hall duties near their own rooms; however, some did have to travel a distance in this large facility and were not always able to arrive at their assigned posts punctually. Teachers were also expected to help sweep students outside their own rooms into classes.

A social worker, school psychologist and truant officer came to Bowen several days a week. The school nurse was employed there full time. Aides helped to make telephone calls in addition to their hall monitoring and other duties.

In response to the question, "What was it like when you first came here as a new teacher?" the majority of teachers interviewed at Bowen replied with such comments as, "It was a terrific school, academically and socially," "the students were dynamic," and "the school was a true institution of learning; standards were superior and students worked hard." Other comments ranged from "an ideal place to work," to "active, competitive academic institution" even though it was twice as crowded. Parent participation was cited as a very important element in those years, a joint effort that was missing today. New teachers, those who had not been at Bowen during the "dynamic period" had less complimentary comments, "this place is a zoo;" "students are very hesitant; they need to be motivated," and finally, "sheer chaos; halls are uncontrolled."

Teachers who had been at the school a number of years clearly felt the motivation, preparedness and discipline among students had declined. The racial make-up of Bowen students during its "high quality" days was a true cross section of racial groups -- White, Black and Hispanic. In 1986 the student body was almost equally divided between Blacks and Hispanics.

When asked to rate their sense of morale at Bowen, teachers answered average (nine) to poor (nine); two refused to comment other than to say that teacher morale could be judged to be the same as at any other high school in the city of Chicago. No one would rate faculty morale as "excellent" today. They expressed the greatest frustration with the way the school was managed, the leadership of the administration, administrative support and the enforcement of rules. Teachers felt absences, tardiness and cutting were severe problems at the school, a runaway train that could not be stopped.

Bowen had a set of rules and policies to deal with cutting, including reporting cuts and making calls to parents. All teachers interviewed stated that they followed these rules. Punishment for excessive cutting included in-school suspension with a parent conference. Teacher aides, teachers and counselors called students' homes to report cuts. Each year, teachers felt, the lists of students to call got longer; eventually everyone was overwhelmed by the sheer number of calls that had to be made. At the beginning of the new school year at Bowen, teachers were poised to solve the cutting issue; new policies were made and approved. Gradually the effort began to disintegrate as students tested the rules. By the spring of 1986, the students were in control of their attendance, particularly in those classes after Division period. The end result was that teachers resorted to failing students for lack of attendance. Two teachers reported having a 50-55% failure rate due to attendance alone. Lack of administrative guidance, support, enforcement and "follow-through" were seen by teachers as the reasons cutting had become so frequent and accepted.

While the home and community environments concerned a minority of the teachers, lack of student motivation and desire to learn was frustrating. They perceived more of their students entering high school poorly prepared to do the work. Seventeen of the 20 teachers interviewed said a high percentage of their students were not able to work at the required level; three teachers had more neutral comments such as, "as well as could be expected," or "some are better prepared than others."

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY RELATIONS

The principal was transferred to Bowen in 1979 from the position of assistant principal at another high school. With a total of five degrees, he has an impressive educational history. He was guided by principles that can be summed up in the school's motto, "a tradition of excellence and achievement." In an interview he stated that he tried to be personally involved in the management of the school and to devote his "top" performance to all that he did. He believed that he maintained a high visibility and availability and that he had a good rapport with his staff. Stating that he, "understands their problems," he acknowledged that students wece arriving at the high school not fully prepared. He credited his administration for changing the school's previously violent atmosphere by enforcing the disciplinary code.

Fifty percent of the teachers interviewed at Bowen characterized their relationship with the principal as "friendly but formal." Fifteen percent considered their relationship with him to be "unworkable," and preferred to minimize contact. Concerning style of management, 45% of Bowen's staff regarded the principal as a man who solicited staff opinions but ultimately made the decisions; one qualified this statement by adding, "but fails to carry them through." Others could not pin down a particular view of their principal's style; two said he was a well meaning person, but that there was no way of knowing how he made decisions. Four (20%) suggested that he paid no attention to faculty suggestions, opinions or ideas. There were suggestions that he was an autocratic leader by nature but gave the appearance of being democratic. One faculty member declared him a "man for all seasons -- democratic, makes decisions from the top, delegates authority, and maintains control in his own hands."

A fifth of the teachers interviewed claimed they were aware of problems between the principal and faculty. Teachers who openly disagreed with or who challenged the administration were said to be in considerable trouble at best and to face possible dismissal at worst.

VIII. FACULTY AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS

Classroom observations of student behavior and teacher attitudes and methods revealed that lecturing and question and answer discussions were the main teaching styles at Bowen. Only two instructors followed the procedure of review and summary of the previous session, introduction of a new idea, summary of the main points and then feed-back through a repeat and recall session. In 75% of the observed classes at Bowen there was at least some classroom discussion and interaction between the teacher and students as a group. In two of the observed classes (drafting and computers) students were individually supervised during class. Three instructors fed information to the students, but received very little response during the question and answer period.

There were not frequent interruptions of classes at Bowen from outside. Students behaved well in all classrooms; there were no signs of disrespect in any of the twenty classes observed. Sixteen of the instructors closed their doors during class. Students arrived late to seven classes; in two they had excused notes; in the other five, students were admitted without notes. Bowen teachers were advised in the faculty handbook to admit students who are late, but to mark students tardy and confer with them if the practice continues. There was an intercom system at Bowen that interrupted two of the observed classes with announcements.

Of the 20 classrooms observed at Bowen, 25% had perfect attendance. The average daily attendance reported for 1986 was a mediocre 84%. Teachers reported a high percentage of absences on Mondays, Fridays and late afternoons. However, three quarters of Bowen teachers interviewed reported low absence rates of from one to ten percent. The principal considered truancy to be a major problem. He attributed absences to a variety of factors: parents losing primary control over their children, pressures from peers (gangs), and economic conditions (lack of money for food, clothing, housing and education). He further believed that these factors could be the major contributors to the dropout problem. According to him, "attendance is very important," and every effort is made to get the student into school and involved in education.

While most classrooms observed at Bowen were judged to be interesting and well organized, students had different views about their teachers. The worst teachers were those that expected too much, "didn't explain anything," treated kids unfairly, "threw chalk and erasers at students," embarrassed students in front of the class, and were strict to the point of ignoring student needs. Five students reported that they liked all their teachers. Favorite classes among students interviewed included English (4), computers (3), drafting (2) and P.E. (2). History, music, shops, and home arts all received one mention. The teacher was cited as the most important reason students liked the class. Only one liked a class because it was easy.

Finding students at Bowen proved to be more difficult than had been expected. Having each student's schedule and locating the free study period was easy enough; finding the sudent in the study hall was impossible. Study hall teachers showed the ethnographer their record books, listing the students' names followed by absent "slashes" for the year. Locating students became a challenge. When asking about missing students in various offices, the library or counseling office, the most common reply the ethnographer received was "most likely the student has left the school" (Bowen has a closed campus). One student reported to Division, left, and came back later in the day. When the ethnographer caught up with him, he was legally trespassing, entering and departing at his own free will. When asked if they had ever cut classes, 13 Bowen students said yes; seven said no or never. When asked why others cut classes, the most popular reason students gave was "to be outside or in the halls with friends." Boredom, getting too tired, wanting to "get high" outside, wanting to go home to eat and watch TV, and being behind in school work ("feels lost," "too far behind") received several mentions apiece. One student suggested that when he heard there would be trouble ("gang bangs") he would leave to stay out of harm's way because he promised his mother to stay out of trouble, and he might "want to get into it" otherwise. Students were only loosely committed to reporting to class; two who claimed they never cut classes were the hardest students to find in school during their study periods.

IX. STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON DROPPING OUT

Over half (12) of the Bowen teachers interviewed believed that dropping out was a "serious" to "very serious" problem. One said that the dropout rate was normal for a Chicago school. Six teachers attributed dropping out to a home environment where education is not valued or to the fact that students do not see the importance of education. Three believed that peer pressure turned students away from education and toward gangs. Two others cited failures and the inability to the work as reasons for students dropping out. Pregnancy, economic hardship and not having an early intervention system were all mentioned as contributing to the problem.

Students, on the other hand, had different views on why students dropped out of school; alienation and boredom ranked first on the list of reasons students gave. Having multiple failures in school was second and pregnancy third in the frequency of student responses as to why students dropped out. Gangs and drugs were reported as "possible" reasons, but not the major reasons for dropping out.

POSSIBLE FACTORS RELATED TO THE DIFFERENCE IN DROPOUT RATES AT WELLS AND BOWEN

Home, church and school were all competing with gangs for the loyalty of young males in the communities surrounding both Wells Academy and Bowen High School with the competition balanced in favor of gangs in both communities. From statements of students, gang membership did appear to be voluntary. "Gang bangs," noisy, frightening affairs, involved only a small percentage of the male population in both high schools. However, it was felt among some students and teachers that a student could not maintain a serious commitment to a gang and at the same time remain successful in school. In this sense gangs did contribute to the dropout rate. Gangs in the neighborhoods surrounding Wells appeared to be more of a problem than those in the Bowen community.

Some teachers at Wells cited pregnancy as a reason that girls dropped out. Some Hispanic teachers at the school expressed their distress at seeing what they termed "the breakdown of traditional family values." Additionally the problems of the Hispanic nations has added burdens to the already strained bilingual education system. Unemployment in Puerto Rico is forcing more islanders to migrate in search of jobs. Mexicans and others from Central America are arriving expecting full educational services. The majority of these students come to Wells without the necessary educational foundation to enable them to work at the high school level. The problem was more severe at Wells, but staff at both Bowen and Wells acknowledged that they had a population of Hispanic students that continually turned over due to the need to find a job or to commuting back and forth to the home country. Most had to work to help support their families. More resources need to be allocated for the bilingual education students.

Finally, the student who can take a motorcyle apart and rebuild it without schematic instructions is not always well served by a liberal arts education alone. Neither school has been able to meet the needs of this type of student. Bowen offered more shop classes, but they had been judged inadequate and antiquated by the North Central Association. Vocational schools are out of the question for those students who cannot pass the required entrance exams. Computer and business courses, seen to have practical value, appeared to have the most enthusiastic students at Wells.

Wells and Bowen exhibited the fewest differences in the overall comparison of pairs of schools (see Part I) of any of the pairs, yet the dropout rate at Bowen was significantly lower than that at Wells. Several possible factors could to contribute to the lower dropout rate at Bowen. First, there was special Hispanic counseling for all new Hispanic students and others at Bowen. While there were counseling services at Wells, as well, those for Hispanic students were less extensive.

Second, Bowen teachers interviewed appeared to have higher expectations that their students would learn and succeed; a greater number stated that they expected most students to graduate and either get jobs or go on to college or technical schools. Bowen also offered more honors and advanced placement courses.

Finally, Bowen had a better system for notifying students' parents when they were absent. The school had both a telecomputer for making automatic calls to homes and more available phones for staff to use.

JEAN BAPTISTE POINT DUSABLE HIGH SCHOOL

AND

GEORGE W. COLLINS HIGH SCHOOL

JEAN BAPTISTE POINT DUSABLE HIGH SCHOOL

I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Jean Baptiste Point DuSable High School is located in a South Side residential-commercial neighborhood one block east of the Dan Ryan Expressway and six miles due south of the Loop. The Robert Taylor Homes, a large-scale public housing project composed of multiple 16-story blocks, dominates the west side of State Street (which runs along the west face of the school), while 51st Street to the south is a bustling small business district. To the east across Wabash, structures originally built for single families as well as six and twelve flat apartments predominate all the way to the edge of the district, and 47th Street to the north is another small business strip. With 1985 median family income at $8,058, the Grand Boulevard neighborhood ranks 76th out of 77 in the city; as such, it is one of the poorest urban areas in the United States. The 2nd Police District which serves DuSable is reported to have the highest crime rate in Chicago, while gangs and their activities (drug dealing on the street, assaults, theft, graffiti, etc.) are commonplace, almost unavoidable features of the community.

The Tudor style, three story, beige, brick structure was built to opened in the 1935-36 school year, although there have been some additions made to it since then. It should be noted that the building features an unusual number of outside doors (about eight) which the fire department does not permit to be chained during school hours; this makes it possible for anyone knocking on any of the solid, blank steel doors to be admitted to the building. A full-size (440 yard) track and field surrounded by high hurricane fencing lies directly to the north of the building. There are two fenced but never locked parking lots: one on the northeast side of the building, the other southeast. There is no schoolyard--only an arm's breadth of grass between the Wabash sidewalk and the building. The school is significantly marked with graffiti, particularly near the doors. Across Wabash, especially when school lets out at 2:46 pm, there are small numbers of people strolling or hanging out, "gangbangers" among them; Grand Boulevard is not widely held to be a "safe neighborhood."

II. INTERNAL SPACE USE

DuSable, which once housed more than 4500 students, or two and half times the current number, has administrative and counseling offices, some 80 classrooms, two gyms, and a small pool on three floors. The basement is a dank space with a tangle of pipes and ducts kept humid by an underlying natural spring. (School folklore has it that one of the school zoo's gigantic pythons escaped and spent his last days there.) Although the facility is by no means decrepit, there are instances of water-damaged plaster; grafitti is widespread, both in classrooms and hallways.

The classrooms have tile floors and transparent glass windows which can be opened. Most classrooms have two doors, usually locked, with small windows. In virtually all cases, they are boarded up with unfinished plywood save for a 2x6 inch strip of semi-transparent plexiglass. The hallways are relatively featureless, with an infinite or "vanishing point," quality as compared to the classrooms which are almost completely sealed off from them. There is a small auto shop, a machine shop, and several art classrooms. DuSable's library, though only of medium size considering the number of students, is supplemented by adjoining classrooms converted into resource centers. The library's intervening hallway has been sealed off by fire doors, carpeted, and lined with bookcases to form a sort of elite study hall and research area; in fact, it usually has more visitors than the original library facility or the scantily utilized resource rooms.

The lunchrooms, which are large enclosed spaces with multiple doors which can be opened only from the inside, are located on both the first and second floors. The faculty lunchroom is a separate glassed-in space within the second floor student lunchroom. In spite of the decorative painting which screens much of the view, it is still possible to see some of what goes on in the adjoining lunchroom, and the actual cafeteria line is completely visible to the seated teachers. Although the school has no central teachers' lounge, the faculty lunchroom serves as a *de facto* lounge during breakfast and the middle of the day. Departmental offices are also used as lounges throughout the day. The departmental offices are relatively large, closed-off spaces, with desks for each faculty member; often they also contain couches, extra chairs, and plenty of open space.

III. STUDENT BODY

DuSable's enrollment on October 31, 1985 was 2,024; with just eight more male than female students; the gender mix was 50/50. Overall enrollment was down 24 percent from just six years before. The officially listed annualized dropout rate for 1984-85 at DuSable was 12.5 percent, down spectacularly from 20.6 percent the year before; however, this was still 4.6 percentage points higher than Collins' 7.9 percent. On a longitudinal calculation, DuSable's dropout rate was 58.5% for the Class of 1982, rising to 62.5% for the Class of 1984.

Only 17 percent of the students at DuSable were not residents of the school attendance area, which puts it in close competition with Wells High School for attracting the fewest "foreign" students of the eight schools in this study. Median reading and math TAP scores for entering students over the preceding four years ranged between the 12th and 18th percentile, placing DuSable among the lowest ranking schools both citywide and nationally, in terms of the preparedness of entering students to do high school work. For the Class of 1982, only 28 percent of the entering students read at low normal or above rates, and 37 percent were already overaged. The 1980 calculated poverty rate was 78 percent.

Students dressed well and fairly conservatively; punk or work clothes were rarely seen. It seemed that attractive dress was important to students. In general, mainstream "new wave" clothing was the rule: black and dark earth tones juxtaposed to pastels (e.g., pink, powder blue, greens) in sharply cut fabrics, vinyl, and nylon. Boys wore their hair extremely closely cropped, often with a round tuft at the base of the head and one or more narrow razored "parts" shaved into the already short hair. Corn rows, for which the hair is longer, were frequently seen, both undecorated and with beads. There were also a few highly gelled pompadours and more standard styles. Girls' hair tended toward medium length (4-8 inches) and was usually pulled back in barrettes or, less frequently, worn in corn rows. (Afros or dreadlocks were not observed at all.)

Gang colors and insignia were explicitly banned, though one DuSable student, when asked what he would like to see changed at the school, mentioned students who wear six-pointed stars (the Gangsters-Disciples insignia) and their hats cocked to the side (a common gang signifier).

DuSable used study halls to bring students' schedules close to the required 300 minutes instruction per day; few students had 7.5 periods of actual classroom instruction, however. Many students had two consecutive study halls in the afternoon, some of them in the mythical Room 185. The ethnographer, seeking students to be interviewed, once underwent some confusion trying to find those assigned to study halls in this room. It was some time before he discovered that, effectively, this room did not exist! The school had 40 minute periods (plus four minutes passing period on either end), including one such period for lunch.

IV. FACULTY

In 1985-86 DuSable had 115 teachers, 33 percent White and 66 percent Black. However, figures provided by the principal indicated a slightly higher percentage of Blacks. The faculty gender distribution at DuSable was 39 percent men and 61 percent women. Of the DuSable teachers interviewed, 17 had done work beyond the Bachelor's level, with nine of them holding at least one Master's degree.

A. FACULTY ORAL HISTORIES

In their recollections of the years they had spent in the school, teachers discussed changes they had seen in the student body, administration, and general quality of education. There were some themes which were recurrent in both inner-city general high schools, DuSable and Collins.

First among these was the sense, among the faculty, that students' motivation had declined notably since the 1960s (even if there may have been some improvement since 1982-83 when gang activity is said to have peaked). They characterize the students as very diffident ("afraid to win"), defeatist, and ultimately either defiant or apathetic: "They don't understand and are embarrassed and don't want to face it and there are more entertaining things to do elsewhere." This was attributed, in part, to the lack of credible role models[1], the lack of a "sense of accomplishment," a "concept of opportunity,"or real images about success. Teachers tied these issues to the decline of a politically unifying ideology of progress and freedom. Underlying these problems, teachers commented on the dramatic rise in "babies having babies."

Appalled teachers spoke of the days not long ago when teen pregnancy was a rarity and a disgrace for the mother; this was no longer the case, as children frequently entered the 9th grade with one or more children of their own. Obviously the obstacles for such young families are very high, when the parent has not had time to develop intellectually to the point where she even has a clear idea of success, incentives, or the value of education. Her children will be reaching high school before the end of the century, perhaps with children of their own. In this light it is not surprising that many teachers (and students) at DuSable considered the introduction of an extensive health clinic, which includes among its services birth control and prenatal care, to be of absolutely crucial significance in reducing the incidence of girls having their lives profoundly affected by a childhood pregnancy and dropping out of school. The problems of teenage or pre-teen parents were compounded by the rising incidence of single-parent homes. Mothers were so hardpressed (often working at minimum wage) trying to provide for the material needs of their children that socializing them intellectually and professionally was beyond their capacity.[2]

Still, teachers at DuSable generally described their students as "basically good kids," with comparisons being made to the "really tough schools" elsewhere in the city. At the same time, teachers felt that rising apathy among the faculty was due, in part, to the widely felt frustration at being unable to reach a generation of students who had very little sense of the value of education.

At DuSable, there was a pervasive sense that student motivation and classroom discipline had declined in the decade or more that the average teacher interviewed had been there. Yet interestingly, and indicative of the more effective teachers in both schools, one faculty member claimed she had no discipline problem in her classes because she defined the limits of acceptable behavior at the beginning of the year and adhered to them with an iron will. As far as overall discipline is concerned, the introduction of a "closed campus" was deemed to have been of some help, despite the difficulty of enforcing it in a school with many exits. The current principal was assigned to DuSable in 1977, replacing an administrator who was generally regarded as a bold, activist innovator whose main fault may have been the profusion of

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[1] Successful, well dressed criminals, like those seen circling a block in a white Rolls-Royce, are intense, overwhelming competition for the teachers.

[2] Figures on the birth rates at schools were not available.

"notions and programs" that he was constantly introducing. In contrast, the current principal was seen as taking a quieter approach, preferring small, effective programs and facilitating staff initiatives for new approaches. The establishment of the DuSable clinic was an exception to this approach, although it was originally established with virtually no public attention. While opinions were mixed, some teachers ventured that morale had improved under the current principal because of her receptivity, accessibility, and rapport.

Criticism of the administration centered on the loose control of the hallways (though many people cited long-term improvement over the past), lunchrooms, and other in-school areas. From an examination of the faculty assignment sheet, it seems that teachers were assigned irregularly to monitor corridors, especially toward the end of the day. One frightened teacher referred to the hallway outside his class as having a "Night of the Living Dead" quality. Gang activity, which rose in the early 1980s and then declined, was still a danger within the school. One teacher felt that violence in the school tended to "intimidate the sensitive students" and spoke for many when she stated that it was necessary to decisively set the tone for the school and tolerate no misbehavior. Instead, said another, there were "too many rules that go down the drain," and because the principal never criticized the students but only dealt out compliments, the system was not designed for improvement.

Some teachers also felt that, over the course of her tenure, the principal's expectations for the school had diminished and that this was indirectly communicated to the students. One critic complained that the administration should define school year objectives each September in such a way that progress can be evaluated. A less frequently heard criticism was that, beyond the particulars of monitoring the hallways, the principal should provide a stronger, more authoritative role model for the students; instead she seemed reluctant to risk confrontation in a volatile situation. This criticism was usually phrased in the context of voiced opinions that the school needed a "strong, black male" as a father figure for students who often lacked one elsewhere. Finally, there was some feeling that the principal was not rigorous enough in dealing with clearly incompetent teachers.

Teachers felt they were in an especially challenging environment, finding it necessary to "work twice as hard for half the results, and not everyone has that energy." Also, there was a recognition that what students needed from school, even craved, was some sense of control, structure, and order in a world where the family and community did not always provide either structure or a clear set of incentives for achievement.

On a scale of one (always) to five (never), DuSable teachers rated the school a mediocre 2.8 for safety, while Collins teachers gave their school a strong 1.9. For order and quiet, DuSable also received a highly negative rating of 3.5. On the crucial issue of conduciveness to learning, DuSable teachers gave their school an average rating of 2.7. Finally, when asked to judge the level of school pride among themselves and their students, the teachers gave ratings averaging 2.3.

B. COHESIVENESS OF FACULTY

Reflecting their general sense of unity, DuSable teachers gave their most positive assessment, with an average score of 2.1, on the extent to which they felt there was a sense of shared purpose or mission in the school. The faculty at DuSable had friendship cliques and political factions, as would be expected. These friendship groups (as observed in such things as lunchroom groupings) were based on race, age, and gender. The political groupings were more complex.

Faculty members reported little racial polarization or frustration due to staff instability. At DuSable, where the principal was white, the ethnographer (also white) did not hear many comments about race or political factionalism. While race may be the basis for DuSable's cliques, it did not, according to the more detailed interviews on school politics, constitute the basis for chronic antagonism within the school; instead the cliques were said to be based more upon personal antagonisms and seniority; only to a secondary degree did racially based political ideology enter in; the administration has both black and white allies.

Still, a few incidents were reported: a controversial Black History Month assembly speech, a student protest supposedly organized by the "anti-administration faction" against the hiring of a white coach, the segregated seating pattern in the faculty cafeteria. However, these were generally characterized as background features, which only highlighted concerns of a small nucleus of anti-administration teachers and the teachers who occasionally channelled their discontents through them.

However, there was factionalism regarding teacher autonomy and specifically ideological issues. A recent Black History assembly produced intense controversy after the keynote speaker made remarks which many whites and some blacks apparently found demeaning and coarse. The speaker had been brought in by an anti-administration faculty member, and the remarks concerned an exchange between an ex-slave and ex-mistress. While some informants described the speaker's comments as appropriate to the violence and humiliation of the slave experience he was describing, others felt it only contributed to a worsening of personal relations in the school; the administration apparently supported the latter group. A small nucleus of politically active black teachers was the main group supporting the speaker. Since this was the only event referred to by interviewed teachers, DuSable's political factionalism, at least on the highly emotional racial issue, should probably be seen as a more situational polarization of the faculty rather than the result of an inherent response to activities of the administration. Still, at least one teacher felt morale was affected by teacher factions and suggested that events such as the assembly filled students with hostility.

C. MORALE

The morale of the faculty reflected their perceptions of the students, the administration, and their own career growth, to name only three of the most obvious factors.

The major sources of faculty frustration were student unresponsiveness and a general sense of malaise or declining expectations. According to one highly articulate teacher, about 20 percent of the faculty adopt a "What me--worry?" attitude and "play the school." This generalized malaise may reflect the long tenure of the faculty (an average of 12.5 years at the school among those interviewed). The few incidents of ideological controversy along largely racial lines did not seem to generally affect morale.

On the level of administrative relations, some faculty members felt the principal did not exert a strong enough presence in the school and attributed their feelings of disunity and discouragement to a lack of charismatic central leadership.

D. FACULTY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Outside the classroom, teachers have been required to monitor the halls and lunchroom and have been encouraged to sponsor student extracurricular activities. Many extracurricular groups weee active.

V. OTHER STAFF DUTIES

DuSable High School had a standard division of labor for its assistant principals and other upper echelon staff. They were assigned specialized administrative functions appropriate to their training. There were assistant principals for counseling and guidance, discipline, and programming.

The school had a mixture of full-time and part-time security personnel who were employed by the Board and/or the police. There were social workers and a psychologist who came to the school on a rotating basis; they also served other schools in the district. DuSable had a full-time medical staff attached to the newly established clinic.

VI. FACULTY-ADMINISTRATION INTERACTION

The administration at DuSable had been in place for nearly ten years. There was little sense of administrative charisma and few lofty goals expressed by the principal. Teachers frequently characterized the principal as an effective facilitator of programs for whoever wanted them, rather than as forceful innovator (like her predecessor). A quarter of the teachers interviewed credited her with a democratic decision-making style and only one thought decisions came from the top down. Three-fourths thought she solicited staff opinions and 45 percent thought she delegated authority. A third called her a "team player" and just 20 percent suggested that she "maintains control in her own hands."

Indeed, the principal described herself as a "mediator." She saw herself as a flexible, accessible, and informal administrator for whom the staff either had great affection or refered to as "The Administration." At the same time, she showed a familistic concern for the students. The DuSable principal's door was usually open and she was frequently seen in the cafeteria; however, she rarely was observed walking the hallways. Most teachers described her as "big-hearted," friendly, and accessible, if not very forceful with respect to discipline. She was frequently seen conversing with teachers and staff in the outer office area.

In the principal's opinion, a good teacher is characterized, first, by knowledge and organization of his/her subject matter, followed by demonstration of a belief in the dignity of the students and cooperation with the other staff.

VII. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION

The relationship of the most crucial importance is the one between students and faculty; their mutual respect and the teachers' demonstration of personal concern and interest to the individual students appears to be of such crucial significance to student success that it cannot be overstated. This is especially the case with economically disadvantaged students who may not have received as much home encouragement or sense of the "value of education" as their suburban or middle class counterparts. The pervasive dedication of teachers working against very high odds was impressive. The key to their perseverance appeared to be their ability to derive satisfaction from the very few students who succeeded in learning and competing in the marketplace after graduation. Very frequently, teachers described as crowning moments those occasions when alumni returned to thank them or tell of their successes.

VIII. FAILURE

Of the 20 students interviewed at DuSable, 14 (70 percent) admitted that they had failed courses. At DuSable 13 said that their parents had been notified of the fact they were failing, and 11 claimed that a parent-school conference had later taken place.

The teachers interviewed estimated that they failed roughly 35 percent of their students, close to the official figures for the number of students failing *one* course. The primary reason given for failure was non-attendance. The variance between teachers was great, depending on the course level. Honors students cut and failed much less often than Remedial or Basic students, with Regular level students in the middle. Typically, teachers with failure rates in the 10-15 percent range for Honors students reported two to four times that rate for Basic level students.

Failure rates were much higher for underclassmen; over three years at DuSable (1984-86), January failure rates ranged from 73% to 81% for freshmen but only between 29% and 44% for seniors. Failure was also higher during the first and third marking periods (i.e., during the first half of each semester) because students assumed that working a little harder the second marking period would bring the course grade average into the passing range. Teachers also reported marking harder in the first and third quarters to try to stimulate the students to work harder. Indeed, at DuSable during the second marking period of the first semester (the January 1986 grades), 590 students had failed no courses, while 1,301 had failed one or more, making a failure rate of 69 percent.[3]

IX. ATTENDANCE

The teachers estimated absentee rates to be around 30 percent for their classes, seven or eight percent lower than the rates noted in the 20 classes observed. There were 249 students who attended the 20 classes observed at DuSable; of these, 29 (12 percent) were tardy. Of the students interviewed, three said that when students were tardy nothing was done; ten said teachers only sometimes ask for a pass; five said that a pass was required; and six said detention was also a possibility.

For the classes observed, 146 students were absent, making an absentee rate of 37 percent; of those, 61 were said to be virtually always absent, creating a chronic truancy rate of 15 percent. The official attendance rate for the 1985-86 school year to mid-May was 75.1 percent. Thus, the official absentee rate of 24.9 percent was a third lower than the rate of absences in observed classrooms. Since the observed classrooms were selected by random sampling, it is likely that the true absence rate is considerably higher than that which is officially reported. It appeared to be a common practice among teachers to stop reporting absences after a series of consecutive misses; in the central office, students not reported absent were recorded as being present. Thus, it would be possible for chronic truants to have a virtually perfect attendance record after an initial period of absences.

While a computerized Scantron attendance system was supposed to have been on line earlier in the year, hardware problems were blamed for the fact it was still not operational. Consequently, precise records were hard to find and many teachers were cynical as to the effectiveness of the attendance system. Indeed, a simple glance at the Renaissance monthly In-School suspension form confirms this; for the month of January only 12 referrals were made for cuts; a total of 42 referrals for all causes were made in a school of 2,000 students! At Collins, a smaller school, a total of 128 In-School suspension referrals were made in March, 120 of them for cutting.

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[3] It would appear that sometimes the official failure rate is for students failing two or more courses.

One long-time DuSable teacher said he only followed the official procedure in September and October because after that the chronic cutter would be so far behind it did not much matter what one did. Nevertheless, many teachers said they called the homes of absent students, and not just those from their Divisions. Indeed, one very popular teacher said the best technique was to offer help to students because "it eliminates the power struggle." Some teachers said that they notified the Division teacher about cutting while others agreed that the standard procedure was to send a cut slip to the Attendance Office "and forget it. That's policy." After three unexcused absences the student should be put out until the parent comes, another suggested, but then conceded that if that practice were followed, "...that would depopulate the school." In-school detention was the standard response to such behavior, but the number of students so detained was clearly far less than the number of violators.

X. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The most prevalent form of classroom interaction was teacher-led discussion (i.e., an open-ended seminar-type format in which the teacher prompted students to supply answers, complete sentences, and generally get involved). The second most common pattern was individual supervision of student seatwork, with traditional lectures a distant third. Only two classes featured significant amounts of time in which work was being done by small groups of students. When asked how they used their time in class, the average DuSable teacher interviewed said that out of a 40 minute period, exactly half the time was for teaching the subject matter, with 11 minutes for basic skills needed before the subject matter could be understood, six minutes for discipline, and three minutes for paperwork.

On a scale of one ("totally unprepared") to five ("well prepared"), DuSable teachers gave their students only a 1.4 in terms of their basic intellectual preparation for the courses they took. One weary teacher stated bluntly that most of her students simply "...cannot read or write a straight sentence."[4] Interestingly, one of the teachers observed to be least in control of his class deemed his students to be learning disabled and otherwise physically deficient, thereby relieving himself of some of the responsibility for their failure. Conversely, a thoughtful EMH teacher felt that exceedingly poor record-keeping by the Board (no tests had been administered to some of his students for 2-6 years) kept students who may had emotional problems but normal or near-normal intelligence inappropriately consigned to the EMH track.

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[4] While an "effective schools" approach might criticize these responses as reflecting poor expectations on the part of teachers, one must also acknowledge the years of experience that such pessimism reflects.

Yet at the same time, 50 percent of the students interviewed at DuSable said that their teachers thought they should go to college after graduating, with lesser numbers citing jobs and the military as appropriate goals. One student mentioned that some teachers counseled students not to join the military "because it can change you." A DuSable teacher was quoted admiringly for saying that students need not go to college but ought to "make something out of yourself...You have the chance to make what you want of yourself." It may be that this disjuncture between teachers' high expectations for post-graduation performance and their low appraisals of student preparedness may be related to the feelings of many students that school was an irrelevant experience because their real situation was not being addressed.

XI. SECURITY

The primary activity in which the security staff were observed was the screening of students entering the building. This was confined to the major entrances at DuSable, because there was insufficient staff to cover the eight or more entrances. These thick steel doors can be opened by anyone on the inside who cares to respond to a knock. It is reported that when the administration tried to secure some of these doors against non-student intrusion, a teacher filed a complaint with the Fire Department. Department inspectors then issued an order that these doors not be chained during the school day.

To a considerable extent, students at DuSable complained about the ineffectiveness of the security staff. On a scale of one ("very safe") to three ("not safe at all"), DuSable students rated their school a scary 2.4. Charges of unevenness of enforcement, favoritism, avoidance of dangerous situations, and flirting with female students were frequently heard from DuSable students. Gang violence was felt to be holding steady while discipline within the school had declined. Twelve of the twenty students interviewed made complaints about school security: eight complaints were about insufficient enforcement and five related to fairness or favoritism. From cursory observation, it appeared that the DuSable staff was casual in its duties, perhaps resigned to the great difficulty of supervising a sprawling facility with multiple entrances and a significant gang problem within the school.

At DuSable, 19 of the 20 students interviewed asserted that there were gang members in the school; the twentieth was vague. Estimates of membership ranged from a low of 70 students (about 5 percent) up to 80 percent of the student body, with the average estimate at around 40 percent. While the statistical veracity of these estimates is questionable, they reflect a high level of awareness (and in some cases pride![5]) of the gang presence. Only 25 percent of the interviewed students claimed that gangs had no effect inside the school. These students essentially said that the universe of gangs did not touch their own: "If you don't bother them, they don't bother you."

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[5] One student who was drawing an elaborate Disciples motif in his notebook just before I interviewed him claimed that about 80 percent of the DuSable students were in the gang.

More to the point, 14 out of 18 respondents stated that there were unsafe areas in the school; the halls, gym floor, locker room, lunchrooms, and bathrooms were all frequently cited as unsafe. Two of the twenty classes observed were rated as "wild" and possibly unsafe. Two sustained fights were observed at DuSable, one of which a tough male teacher was repeatedly unable to break up. As one student who was contemplating dropping out put it, "You got to watch your back. In any class there will be gangs...They want to mess with you, to show off. Sometimes they want you to ride with them, or think you riding with another gang." There were widespread stories about DuSable's west hallway on the third floor, where both teachers and students claimed gang members moved freely, not only in the hall, but in at least one teacher's class as well.

XII. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

DuSable had an active, very good athletic program, as well as a Student Council made up of elected class representatives. The council met during an early morning period. A major feature of DuSable's effort to keep students from dropping out was the series of student assemblies featuring community leaders (most prominently a clergyman who was sponsoring promising students in college), sports personalities, and other role models who exhorted students to be serious about their futures. Frequently, guest professionals lectured in the classrooms on career possibilities, often with good response.

XIII. CHANGE DURING FIELDWORK PERIOD

At DuSable, increased vigilance within the Attendance Office led to an apparent drop in the number of students walking the halls and a shift in tardiness away from "class tardiness" toward "school tardiness." Fewer students entered individual periods late, but more students were coming late to school in the morning. However, this may have reflected only changes in the way of reporting infractions and in the change of policy regarding late morning arrivals. During the last marking period, no one arriving after the end of first period (8:58 am) was to be admitted without special processing. Before that point, students had been admitted without special processing until about 11:00 am.

GEORGE W. COLLINS HIGH SCHOOL

I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

George W. Collins High School is located in a West Side mixed commercial and residential neighborhood a mile south and four miles west of the Loop. Near Sacramento Avenue, 150 yards south of Roosevelt Road in picturesque Douglas Park, the setting would at first glance seem pastoral. However, the north side of Roosevelt Road which defines the park's northern boundary is a somewhat depressed commercial strip and a dangerous line of demarcation between Chicago's two major gang confederations, the Disciples and the Vice Lords. While less commercially active than 51st or 47th Streets, the neighborhood (especially to the north) bustles with various forms of outdoor exchange. The park stretches nearly a half mile to the south, a shorter distance to the east, and just one block to the west. A neighborhood composed of structures originally built for single families with some six and twelve flats lies to the west and north beyond Roosevelt Road into Vice Lords turf. Smaller scale housing projects are within the school's boundaries just off Roosevelt. The 1985 median family income for the North Lawndale neighborhood, in which Collins is situated, was $11,867, which ranks it the 68th out of 77 Chicago neighborhoods.

The modern three story frosted glass and dark steel academic building, with its attached gym-pool and fine arts-auditorium facility, opened in 1976. Numerous patches of painted-over graffiti blotch the outside skin of the complex. In spite of the expanse of the three building facility, there are only four unchained public entrances. There is no athletic field directly abutting the building; instead, physical education and sports groups must walk a short distance southwest into the park toward Marshall Boulevard. There are two fenced parking lots; the northern one is locked throughout the school day (from 8:00 am to 2:46 pm). Located in a renowned urban-pastoral landscape, the school may be said to have several hundred acres of "yard" but, as one student put it, "You better watch your back out there." Aside from the normal levels of police protection, the school is unable to guarantee students' personal safety either before they enter the door in the morning or once they set foot outside the building after school.

II. INTERNAL SPACE USE

Collins has three floors of offices and classes, a basement for custodial and food service functions, and the aforementioned attached facilities (both one tall story in height). Besides the extensive gyms, weightlifting room, and full-size pool, there are approximately 35 classrooms, including a well-equipped print shop, drafting room, auto shop, and an art studio located in the fine arts building. Under the current scheme of space utilization, some open space, formerly a cafeteria, is being used for classes and study halls, while some former classrooms are now departmental offices. At least one teacher complained that it was difficult to keep his "open" classroom focused on academic work because of the distractions that its "public" location afforded. The library space is vast--probably twice the total floor area of its more than adequate counterpart at DuSable--but with an apparently smaller *accessible* collection. The administrative and counseling offices are on the first floor.[6]

The student cafeterias at Collins are smaller, open areas on the second and third floors. The teachers' lunchroom is a separate, enclosed facility next to, but invisible from, the second floor student eating area.

Classrooms were grouped by subject area and teachers usually were assigned a single classroom. Sometimes teachers with "scheduling problems" taught in two or three classrooms. The classrooms at Collins have rust-colored carpeting, low ceilings, and translucent window panels which cannot be opened. A few teachers at Collins complained of shortages of books; one of the teachers attributed it to lack of storage space in the basement book room. The walls at Collins are in good shape and little graffiti was found inside the school. Collins' hallways are short, wide, and carpeted in the main facility, more foyer-like. The classrooms have windowed doors which are often left open and many walls are transparent in many cases. The fine arts and physical education buildings have a rather chilling quality.

Until recently, Collins had a central teacher's lounge, but it had been converted into a central counseling area, and the teachers now lounged in the teachers' lunchroom or their separate departmental or individual offices. A few teachers also periodically stopped to talk informally in the central office. The departmental offices are closed-off spaces with desks for each faculty member often abutting each other. The offices rarely have room for two people to walk past each other; often they seemed to have more people in them conversing than they could comfortably handle. The counseling offices have a central waiting area and office space with one or more detached office spaces.

III. STUDENT BODY

The enrollment at Collins was 1,411 students according to the October 31, 1985 Racial Survey. There were 122 fewer males than females, for a 46/54 gender mix. Overall enrollment was down 22 percent from the 1979-80 school year. Collins' official, annualized dropout rate was 7.9 percent, up 2.7 percentage points from the previous year. On a longitudinal calculation, according to the Panel's previous study, Collins' dropout rate was 48.1% for the Class of 1982, but rose to 53.1% for the Class of 1984. Among the eight schools studied, Collins placed just ahead of Hubbard High School for the most non-resident students with 52 percent, a remarkably high figure for a school academically in the lower fifth of the city's secondary schools must be attributed to its advantages over the nearby alternatives: its excellent physical facility, slightly better test scores, relative safety, or lower dropout rates (Cf., Manley--53.2% in 1982, Marshall--57.3%, Farragut--55.3%).

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[6] However, the new decentralized administrative structure at Collins places an assistant principal on each floor.

Reading and math TAP scores for entering freshmen at Collins High School for the last four years have hovered at just below the twentieth percentile, thus ranging in the lower echelon of school test scores citywide as well as nationally. Only 26.1 percent of the entering students in the Class of 1982 read at average or above levels and 33 percent were overaged. The calculated poverty rate in 1980 was 66 percent.

The lunchroom tended to be raucous at Collins; however, only food fights were reported there. Likewise, the hallways tended to be jammed with clusters of two to six students talking while standing or strolling between classes. Noise levels approached the pain threshhold as animated discussion reverberated against the metal lockered walls. At Collins the hallways tended to empty out between classes; at least they are free of large numbers of students congregating there. Only two students cited the hallways and bathrooms as places for fights[7] and no one spoke about serious fights in the lunchroom.

Classroom behavior is analyzed in detail below, but to anticipate, there were only three classes with uncontrolled talking (i.e., by students on non-class related matters over a significant part of the class period) at Collins, and no incidences of totally uncontrolled classes. An attentive library staff did its best to prevent talking by the students there for "study" (as opposed to "research") and the students were quite compliant. Basically, the library and the effective teachers' classes were the core learning areas.

IV. FACULTY

According to Board of Education figures, Collins, with 96 teachers, was 26 percent White, 70 percent Black, 1 percent Asian, and 1 percent Hispanic. In 1979, the faculty was nearly equally divided between White and Black teachers.

There was a striking contrast between teacher experience at Collins and DuSable. This fact both reflects the instability of staff at Collins and the fact that Collins High School has only existed for ten years. Meanwhile DuSable, the first black high school in Chicago, has been in existence for fifty years. The average DuSable teacher interviewed had been at the school for 12.5 years out of an approximate total of 17 years of teaching, while the average Collins teacher interviewed had been there for only 5.0 years despite the fact teachers overall had been teaching an average of 14 years. The DuSable teachers had taught in an average of 1.7 other schools; the Collins teachers had been at 2.6 other schools.

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[7] One brief, but intense, scuffle was observed between two girls in the gym hallway at Collins.

A. TENURE AND TRAINING

Seventeen out of 96 Collins teachers had done work beyond the bachelor's level in fields related to teaching (one had an M.B.A.), with eight of them holding at least one Master's degree.

B. FACULTY ORAL HISTORIES

Collins teachers, who had been there since it opened in 1976, recalled the initial enthusiasm and esprit de corps--a kind of pioneer sensibility that a close-knit group was moving out across challenging, unbroken ground. This was due in part to the fact that the previous principal had handpicked a core of the staff. One teacher from that group recalled that the founding principal was "like a guru;" he was most comfortable with an homogenous ideological climate and one was well advised not to disagree with him.

As the faculty turned over with great rapidity in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the initial aura was lost and the climate became acrimonious. Regardless of race, many of the new faculty had been transferred into the school and were not as eager to be there as the "first generation" had been. Cliques formed on the basis of closeness to the administration, friendship, and race. Both Black and White faculty commented on the principal's solidarity with the hard-pressed Lawndale community and deep commitment to the aspirations of Black people. Not all White teachers were comfortable with this type of leadership.

On a scale of one (always) to five (never), Collins teachers rated the school quite safe (average rating, 1.9). However, the average rating for order and quiet was quite higher at 3.3 (sometimes). Similarly, the teachers thought the school was only moderately conducive to learning (rating, 3.1), moderately successful in engendering school pride (2.8), and were mixed in assessing the existence of a shared mission among the faculty (rating of 3.2).

Interviewed teachers indicated that as the composition of the faculty changed the ideological climate became hard on staff morale. Many (but not all) White teachers, as well as some Blacks, described the previous principal as politically committed to Black pride, cultural identity, and social progress. They characterized the atmosphere of the school as racially charged. Members of the handpicked core staff were said to be intensely loyal to the principal, reinforcing the image of two rigidly deployed camps whose political interests extended to the level of mayoral politics. Opinions differed as to the degree to which such acrimony affected teachers' classroom performance. According to some interviewed teachers, this *perception* of tension, as well as whatever actuality lay behind it, tended to polarize the social structure of the fa[illegible]y, affected to some degree faculty morale, and, as a result, had an influence upon some teachers' classroom performance. As one teacher put it, "You can only give out so many E-1's."

By most accounts, the new administration, which began in the fall of 1985, had sought to calm the tension and reorganize the school. Faculty-administration relations were said to be better, if not especially close. While most teachers felt that the "jury is still out" on the new principal, there seemed to be a generalized sense that the principal had yet to demonstrate the consistency of his lofty principles of harmony and nurture with the actualities of administration, particularly in terms of supporting the teachers' autonomy and authority in their classrooms.

C. MORALE

At Collins High School, morale differed to some extent according to the race of the teachers. A significant number of Black teachers, especially those who have lived in the Lawndale community, expressed a personal commitment to their students' development; some cited direct personal involvement in the lives of families in the community. These teachers said they should be at Collins because they were needed there. The White teachers interviewed expressed strong commitments to educating their students; at the same time, all teachers often expressed deep frustration at not being able to reach a large number of their students. In effect, the dropout rate affected morale as much as morale affected the dropout rate. However, one sensed among some of the Black staff a strong sense of kinship with their students.

A sense of disgust at the Board policies and discord within the school transcended racial boundaries. The fiscal crisis in the Chicago schools created massive teacher movement in the early 1980s. There was reported friction between the previous principal and some teachers. This combination of outward and inward uneasiness had combined to produce insecurity and instability among the faculty. The faculty turnover rate in Collins' first nine years was 140 percent--118 positions changed hands in a faculty numbered at about 96. Second, there was uncertainty regarding how the new administration's professed goals of harmony and self-governance would be realized. There was also considerable concern about the current principal's inaccessibility. Individual teachers were required to make appointments several days in advance; faculty meetings were exceedingly rare; little contact or consultation, even with department heads, was reported. Most faculty interviewed maintained a "wait and see" attitude when asked to make general assessments of an administration only now beginning to influence the character of the school.

The overall sense of Collins' teachers was often intense dedication to the students combined with a feeling of isolation and tension with respect to the administration and other faculty. At the same time, other teachers felt that they had lost enthusiasm for teaching as a result of the Board and school level politics to which they were subjected: staff cutbacks, the desegregation plan, and strikes of several years ago all leading to wholesale movements of faculty throughout the system. As a result, the original handpicked staff at Collins was decimated, only to be replaced by teachers who were perhaps less enthusiastic about being in the school, whether for reasons of location or the nature of the school. According to one highly expressive teacher, due to the school's newness and the already volatile political climate within it, the Board's shuffling of personnel was felt especially Collins. Students complained of having two or three teachers for a single class in the course of a year. In this light, it is perhaps significant that some of the teachers interviewed felt there was a significant number of incompetent, ineffective, uninterested, apathetic teachers in the school.

One undeniable effect of having a less enthusiastic, less well-established faculty, was the drop in sponsors for extra-curricular activities. It was almost universally felt that supplying students with "wholesome activities" after school gives them important personal relationships with teachers and can offer social skills indispensable to success in the marketplace. On the other hand, some frustrated teachers attributed their problems more exclusively to in-school factors. As one teacher put it, "People used to get burned up; now they're getting burned out."

D. FACULTY NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Outside the classroom, teachers have been required to monitor the halls and lunchroom and have been encouraged to sponsor student extracurricular activities. At Collins, the new administration has emphasized that it wishes teachers to focus on teaching and not be distracted by such non-academic functions as monitoring the halls. Consequently, in April of 1986, hall monitoring requirements were relaxed. Due to the high turnover of the faculty at Collins, there were very few sponsors for after-school events. In addition, some teachers reported fear at the prospect of staying in the neighborhood after dark.

V. OTHER STAFF

At Collins, the three assistant principals, since the beginning of the winter 1986 semester, have each been responsible for all functions pertaining to one of the building's three floors. Previously they were in charge of separate program specialties: discipline, programming, and guidance.

Collins had a mixture of full-time and part-time security personnel who are employed by the Board and/or the police. The school had social workers and psychologists who came to the school on a rotating basis; they also served other schools in the district. At Collins the nurse was assigned on a part-time basis.

VI. FACULTY-ADMINISTRATION INTERACTION

At Collins, the principal had adopted an aloof, even magisterial, personal style to go with his eloquently stated commitment to create a familistic, caring, intellectually focused community in the school. Of the teachers interviewed, only one thought he had a democratic decision-making style, while 90 percent thought decisions came from the top down. Fifty-five percent did think staff opinions were solicited, however. Sixty-five percent affirmed that authority was delegated, but only 20 percent characterized the present principal as a "team player." Seventy percent thought he "maintains control in [his] own hands."

The present principal saw the main cause of the dropout problem as low expectations on the part of students and staff. He believed that if there were not teacher defeatism on the issues of absenteeism, cutting, and tardiness, they would not occur. Likewise, the students were embarrassed about their learning deficiencies. In order to avoid further ridicule from other students and the embarrassment which accompanies it, they stopped participating, he suggested, which only magnified their failings. Therefore, in the Collins principal's opinion the first thing to be remedied must be the supportiveness of the atmosphere--safety and comfort in an academic setting.

The principal expressed democratic and Christian goals for freedom, safety, mutual support, and constant improvement in performance until the students were on the same level as any other school in the city. He held that the most important qualifications for teachers in this setting were their concern and energy for the students, followed by command of the subject matter and a style of teaching with love that generates warmth in the learner; "No-one should leave depressed." He believed that if the school staff showed sufficient concern and dedication, the whole learning experience would fall into place, eliminating the need for most discipline as the students responded to the selfless love shown them by rising to the level of the expectations placed on them.

"All God's children have the ability to learn at acceptable rates....Every kid should be a better social, spiritual, emotional, academic individual." Indeed, the principal described himself as a "preacher" on self-respect and human decency as well as the chief disciplinarian: "I am It." This must be understood, however, as a description of his role as ultimate arbiter, not his everyday posture; everyday matters were delegated to the discipline staff and assistant principal(s) appropriate to the case. As the principal himself put it, a leader doesn't have the answer; he encourages people to find it. One bemused teacher threw up her hands: "His philosophy isn't just different from the previous principal's; it's Different!"

The ethnographer encountered some incomprehension and skepticism about this approach: one cynical teacher complained that "We have to love 'em to death," reflecting a widespread sentiment that faculty had little administration support in disciplining their classrooms. The implication was that the Collins administration took the students' side against the teacher. As one teacher put it, "Nowadays if a kid throws food in the lunchroom, you have to go through changes to discipline him." Another said this paralyzed them and kept them from being effective "kings of the classroom." This faculty concern reflected a fundamental contradiction facing the system: on one hand, the schools are committed to educating children; on the other, many teachers felt that, when they were forced to admit tardy students and retain even disruptive, uncooperative students in their classes, education became only that much more difficult--to the detriment of those students who did want to learn. One new teacher stressed that "You must have a classroom you can teach in."

Consequently, the "dumping ground" metaphor was frequently applied both to the classrooms and to the inner city schools in general. However, in the latter case, it was felt that the poorer neighborhood schools were at a disadvantage because the magnet and other elite schools had siphoned off the best students who could serve as role models for the less successful, not because they were forced to keep students who didn't want to be there. Yet, teachers seemed to regard these two senses of "dumping ground" as two sides of the same coin. One other sense of the "dumping ground" metaphor is not discussed below: the sense in which inner-city general high schools are at times (though it cannot be over-emphasized that this does not mean exclusively or even largely) repositories for inferior teachers. What is also considered is the extent to which ineffective teaching is the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy; many teachers at both schools held, as did the Collins principal, that some teachers have adopted such low expectations of their students that success becomes impossible.

While confessing that he had as yet been unable to dedicate much time to working with students and teachers, the Collins principal stated that he would like to spend 75 percent of his time doing so. In fact, during the fall of 1985, he spent some time walking the halls and briefly looking in on classes, teachers reported that such inspections had dropped off. During the four weeks spent at the school, the ethnographer never observed him in the cafeteria or walking the hallways. This is in marked contrast to reports about the previous principal who was viewed as a stern disciplinarian, but who had the students' respect and was a periodic classroom visitor. In general, the teachers saw the new principal as trying to follow through on the positive initiatives of the previous administration, but they were beginning to feel he might suffer from diffuseness. There were widespread complaints about his laissez-faire attitude toward tardiness and other discipline issues, as well as about his personal inaccessibility. One teacher reported, "Feedback is neither solicited, given, accepted, nor utilized."

Regarding teacher input, the principal stated with some irony, "Everybody's got a solution." As mentioned above, faculty meetings had been very rare and it was said that teachers must have an appointment several days in advance if they wished to talk to him in private. His office door was invariably closed and he generally seemed to maintain a low profile in the school. Some department heads complained that they were not consulted on decisions affecting their teaching staffs and curricula. The most pervasive innovation of the new principal had been the introduction of assistant principals as floor managers; this feature essentially replaced the principal in most of his everyday roles because a virtually autonomous new level of administration saw to all normal functions for each floor. Teachers stated that though more complicated, and perhaps limiting to teacher autonomy, this new system was more personalized, made teachers more accountable, and led to the hallways being better governed. A second change (more of emphasis than structure) was the upgrading of English and math resource centers for basic skills support.

At Collins, no single outstanding instances of conflict within the school were reported. Rather many people described or alluded to a general atmosphere of tension and demoralization. One major factor in that atmosphere was that the previous principal reportedly designated all faculty positions as Options for Knowledge, which essentially invalidated seniority and opened the job to the principal's discretionary replacement, provided faculty desegregation guidelines were followed.

VII. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION

At Collins, students occasionally stated the teachers were what made their school special. There were one or two teachers whom students frequently characterized as especially good or as personal favorites. Typical in students' descriptions of what made a good teacher was the idea that they "...make you feel they want you to be there...you're needed." One student said that her favorite teacher explained why she was teaching and what the survival value of education is. Another said her teacher gave a lot of encouragement and feedback, "She knows you can do better, and tells you when you are doing wrong or right." More fundamentally, students appreciated teachers who took the time to explain concepts at the level where they could be understood. Conversely, a bad teacher was one who was perfunctory in the discharge of his duties and did not take the time to explain: "She was just there." One teacher singled out as exceptionally bad had students write repeatedly, under the guise of learning tenses, a formula which said, in paraphrase, "I was born in the ghetto. I live in the ghetto now. I will always live in the ghetto."

Warm interactions between students and teachers were frequently seen both inside and outside the classroom. On the other hand, 14 of 20 students said they had teachers who had trouble getting the attention of the students in their classes. However, at Collins respect for teachers seemed to run deep; discipline was less of a problem and the classes observed were well behaved. Students there cited strong enforcement of the tardiness rules and generally perceived Collins to be safer, at least within the school building.

VIII. SECURITY

On a scale of one ("very safe") to three ("not safe at all"), Collins students gave their school a moderate 1.7. It was generally held that gang violence had declined since its peak around 1982-83. Two students complained of the lack of enforcement by school security staff, two of favoritism, and one of going easy on gangs, Nineteen of 20 students interviewed asserted there were gang members in the school but the average estimate as to how many students were involved was only about 20 percent. Indeed, seven of the twenty students claimed the gangs had no effect inside the school,

Still, at Collins, "...gangbangers will get in your face," which, though "...you can walk it off," made at least one student say she had started to hate school. Gangbangers "...cut class, make noise, smoke reefer in the locker rooms and bathrooms, hang outside. They always in detention and scare students, take their money...the peon fee." However, even though eight Collins students admitted that they had been in trouble themselves, only four respondents said the school was unsafe indoors: the hallways, bathrooms, and locker rooms (but significantly not the lunchrooms) were cited. One Collins student did say the gangbangers "...running it really bad on the third floor" and that against them the hall monitors were ineffective.

Twelve students admitted they had cut a class at some point. Typical of the motives students ascribed to other students who cut was the inventory offered by one Collins student: "...to mess around, hang out, smoke, play gang signs." However, when asked to explain why they themselves cut, students typically cited tiredness near the end of the day or a test for which they were unprepared. The social center near the gym was singled out as a place inside Collins where cutters could congregate.

IX. FAILURE

Of the 20 students interviewed, 14 (70 percent) admitted that they had failed courses. All 14 said that their parents had been notified of the fact that they were failing, and 11 claimed that a parent-teacher conference had later taken place. Failure rates were much higher for underclassmen. For the January 1986 marking period, 63 percent of freshmen failed at least one course, while only 29 percent of seniors did so. In all, 777 of 1,373 students failed at least one course, a 56 percent failure rate.

On a scale of one ("totally unprepared") to five ("well prepared"), teachers rated their students low in terms of their basic intellectual preparation for the courses they took. Collins teachers gave their students an average of 1.8. Yet at the same time, 50 percent of the students interviewed at DuSable and 55 percent of those interviewed at Collins said that their teachers thought they should go to college after graduating, with lesser numbers citing jobs and the military as appropriate goals.

X. ATTENDANCE

The average class observed had 16 students present; 324 students attended the 20 classes. Of these, 59 (15 percent) came late to class. Of the students interviewed at Collins, four said nothing was done about tardiness, ten said they were simply marked tardy, and four said a pass was sometimes required. None cited detention as a punishment for tardiness. This suggests that tardiness was not stringently enforced at Collins.

For the 20 classes, 195 were absent, making an absentee rate of 38 percent; of these, 85 were said to be virtually always absent, making a chronic truancy rate of 16 percent. It is probably significant that these "in class" absentee figures were considerably higher than the official figures for the whole school. Official monthly attendance at Collins was 89.9 percent in September 1985 and declined steadily at a rate of about 3 percent per month throughout the fall semester. After rebounding 1 percent to 81.1 percent in January, the attendance rate continued to slide, but at the much slower rate of about 0.5 percent per month; the figure for March (the last month available) was 80 percent, making an official, school-wide absentee rate of 20 percent, which was some 45 percent lower than the rate in the classroom sample. Absenteeism was worst early in the morning and late in the afternoon; it was higher for remedial, basic, or support classes regardless of the time of day, particularly where these involved underclassmen or demoted students.

Teachers' response to the absenteeism problem was to turn in their Scantron computerized attendance sheets daily, notify the discipline office about chronic absentees, and sometimes call the homes of their absent students. This was reported to be standard practice for most teachers with respect to their Division students and sometimes was extended to students missing from their classes. Home visits and other forms of action beyond normal requirements were notable but not very common. Zero hour[8] and in-school detention were the next logical step, but clearly could not deal with the total number of violators. The new attendance program which was supposed to focus on the 100 most problematic attendance cases had just begun the semester of the study and was not yet fully operational, by most accounts, or coordinated with the rest of the student attendance monitoring system.

Indeed, many teachers complained of the systems's "fuzziness" and the proliferation of successive procedures instituted over the past few years. Some teachers were baffled as to what the standard practice actually was. "You report [cuts] to the Attendance Officer, make out a myriad of forms--which are unclear--to different offices, with uncertain effect." However, the first optional step was supposed to be to call the students' homes, whether they were in a teacher's Division or in the teacher's class. Typically, after three cuts, the first step most teachers took was to notify the student's Division teacher who, if unable or unwilling to reach the student's home,[9] then notified the Attendance Office, which could recommend Zero Hour or In-School suspension. Chronic cases were referred to the new attendance program for the 100 most at-risk cases. The last step the school would take for chronic cutters would be course failure and reference to the truant officer. As one student put it, the prevalant teacher attitude is, "You don't come? You don't get it? That's your problem."

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[8] This refers to the hour before school begins; i.e., 7 to 8 am.

XI. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The most prevalent form of classroom interaction was individual supervision of students by teachers, followed closely by teacher-led discussion (i.e., an open-ended, seminar-type format in which the teacher prompted students to supply answers, to complete sentences, and generally got them involved); traditional lecture was a distant third. No classes were characterized as having a significant amount of small group work. Collins teachers thought they could spend a bit more time on the subject matter (54 percent) and correspondingly less on basic skills (22 percent), with 14 percent discipline and nine percent paperwork. It should be noted that teachers said the amount of time spent on discipline and basic skills was far greater in the fall than near the end of the year.

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[9] Fake phone numbers and parental excuse notes are frequent problems.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN DUSABLE AND COLLINS HIGH SCHOOLS

I. POLICY COMPARISONS

A. CURRICULUM

The curriculum in the two schools was essentially the same; both schools are general high schools offering some vocational and distributive educational courses. Students are tracked as Learning Disabled, Educably Mentally Handicapped, Basic, Essential, Regular, and Honors. Recently, Essential and Regular levels had been combined over the protests of some teachers who felt they served very different kinds of students. Both schools had Principals' Scholars Programs, which were designed to serve the most able students, even though many of those enrolled in them scored just at the 50th percentile level.

B. PROMOTION

Both schools had similar promotion policies, requiring students to have two, six, and ten credits to advance to the sophomore, junior, and senior years respectively, and 18 credits to graduate, with allowance for two credits to be made up in summer school before the senior year. Officially, both schools deemed the sophomore year to be the best year for holding back students having problems, but, in fact, only Collins adhered closely to the policy: of 238 seniors in 1985, 150 had advanced straight through from ninth grade; 53 had advanced straight through to the senior year the year before and had returned for a second senior year; and 14 had repeated their sophomore year.

In the same year, of 242 juniors, 143 (59%) had advanced straight through from the eighth grade while 44 (18%) were repeating their junior year and only 11 (5%) had repeated their sophomore year. Finally, there were 481 sophomores--exactly as many students as in the two upper classes combined. Of the 10th graders, 254 had advanced straight from the 7th grade, 101 (21%) were repeating the year, 30 (6%) were repeating it for a second time, and 12 had been moved past the eighth grade into high school and them promoted to sophomore. Thus, more than a quarter of the sophomore class had been retained there. This pattern reflects the fact that many dropouts never get past the sophomore year; they are retained at that grade for lack of credits until they reach the legal age of 16 to be recorded as a dropout. An undetermined number of these students are "chronic truants" who have stopped coming to school before the age of 16.

The picture at DuSable was strikingly different. Of 258 seniors, 140 (54%) had gone straight through high school to that level, 45 (17%) had repeated 10th grade, and 30 (12%) had either repeated 11th or were repeating 12th grade. Of the 338 juniors, 174 (51%) had gone straight through since 8th grade, 33 (10%) had repeated ninth grade, and 27 (8%) had repeated 10th. But, unlike at Collins, of the 638 sophomores (more than the two upper classes combined), 321 (50%) had gone straight through, 63 (10%) had repeated ninth grade, but only 48 (8%) were repeating tenth grade, and 47 had been jumped past the eigth grade into high school and were eventually promoted to sophomore. Twenty-two students had repeated seventh grade before being moved into high school. Therefore, there were five times as many students who had presumably been "kicked upstairs" from the elementary level (promoted due to age, not academic preparedness) and less than half as many were being held back in their sophomore year. Only small numbers of sophomores at Collins had been held back their freshmen year, while 63 at DuSable had been retained, perhaps reflecting their more deficient elementary school histories.

In general, teachers felt at both schools felt they were put in difficult positions by their principals who urged them to keep as many students as possible in class. Indeed state funding is dependent on attendance and the stated goal of the school system is to educate the city's young people. On the other hand, teachers frequently said that their jobs were made more difficult by the administrative pressures to keep uncooperative, disruptive students in the school. More acutely, it was said that students' grades were changed when a principal thought teachers were dealing too severely with their charges.

In theory, teachers said, a student could not be failed purely for failure for non-attendance; even though, in fact, this was why some otherwise bright people did abysmally on tests. At both schools, 20 consecutive absences is grounds for being dropped for truancy.

C. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

It was said that the new principal at Collins did not consult department heads very frequently concerning staff assignments, while at DuSable there was more cooperation between levels of the system, both in consultation and through the schoolwide curriculum committee. At both schools, most teachers who did not chair departments had responsibility for Divisions. In theory these "home rooms" were theirs for the full four years during which a class of students passed through the school. In practice, however, the high dropout rates necessitated consolidation of Divisions after a year or two, with the teachers being reassigned. Division teachers served as general purpose counselors, attendance officers, and assistant programmers .They distributed grades, helped students make course choices, and talked on a one-on-one basis with them about particular problems they may have had. Both schools had "demote divisions," a practice which concentrates all the problem students in one place thus eliminating the opportunity to interact with more positive role models. Teachers pointed to the analogy with public housing patterns which similarly concentrate poor people.

D. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Lists of extracurricular activities at both schools were solicited but not obtained. Among the activities which are referred to in this discussion, there were many which did not have sponsors and hence did not really exist. This was especially true at Collins. Both administrations considered extracurricular activities to be highly worthy endeavors, endowing students with valuable social experiences and specific job skills, as well as creating opportunities for closer contact with teachers who could serve as role models for them.

There were academic restrictions on Collins and DuSable students with failing grades who wished to participate on sports teams.

E. ABSENCES

Unexcused absences are those for which the student cannot present a note or another form of excuse for his absence. Some teachers would not accept notes because they could obviously be forged and frequently were. Policy held three unexcused absences to warrant Zero Hour (Collins) or In-School (DuSable) suspension. Zero Hour detention means students must report before their first regular period. In-School suspension was also employed at Collins for more serious issues. Parent conferences were called at times, but as with grade pickup, cooperation was limited.

Division teachers in both schools were to call the homes of students who cut, though complicance with this rule, at least during the late winter and spring when this study was conducted, was inconsistent. However, some teachers actually visited the homes of their students; in some cases teachers also had other relationships with the families (e.g., church or community organizations).

Neither school had a functional computerized telephone calling system, and there were few phones available for teachers to make calls. One observed classroom had a phone in it, and the teacher, as well as a student aide, were making calls during class time. At Collins, the central teachers' lounge and the telephones located there were removed, ostensibly because teachers were using the phones too much for personal reasons. However, one teacher suggested that the administration wanted to break up an increasingly uncooperative faculty for political reasons.

F. PUNISHMENTS

Both schools utilized In-school suspension. Since this program cannot accomodate more than about 20 students per school, it was used selectively. This was especially the case at Collins, which also made liberal use of Zero Hour detention for low-level discipline problems (e.g., first cuts, etc.) and could accomodate about the same number of students as In-School suspension. Zero Hour was usually a one day punishment, while In-School suspension often extended for three. An alternative was lunch-hour suspension, frequently employed at both Collins and DuSable. Out of school suspension was used for repeated cuts or fighting. Arrests were employed for weapons possession (especially firearms), armed violence, and other criminal offenses. Graffiti writers/taggers were, if caught, required to clean up their work as an initial penalty.

G. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Both schools had special education, principals' scholars, math and English labs, and Options for Knowledge programs. Special vocational and distributive education programs were prominent in both schools.

Among these were horticulture with its "zoo" and courtyard aviary (at DuSable), fashion design (Collins only), business and data processing, Home economics, machine shops, and vocational support services. Both schools also had Adopt-a-School programs, and Collins had a Lighted Schoolhouse (after-hours) activities program. Most visible among DuSable's special programs was its health clinic, which provided a wide spectrum of health treatment and support services. Its provision of birth control information and material has been controversial outside the school, though perhaps less so than the already high pregnancy rate which necessitated special services at both schools.

II. SUMMARY OF OVERALL CONTRASTS

A. THE PRINCIPAL

At Collins, the current principal advocated highly ambitious, even utopian, ideals for the school's progress and administerd the school at a distance. His predecessor was also seen as highly committed to the development of the community but was depicted by some as a fractious administrator.

At DuSable, the principal was committed to the job but did not seem to advocate such high ideals for the progress of the school. She was generally seen as accessible rather than aloof, a mediator rather than an antagonist, and far more involved in the daily particulars of school life.

B. THE FACULTY

Both schools'faculties were majority Black. While the ratio at DuSable was 2:1, at Collins it was 3:1. More important, DuSable's faculty has been relatively stable, while Collins saw a 140 percent faculty turnover rate in its first nine years. While no aggregate figures were available as of this writing, the average teacher interviewed at Collins had been there only 5 years out of 14 years in the profession, while at DuSable, the average teacher interviewed had been there for 12.5 years out of 17 years in teaching. While both schools had political controversy among the staff, often with racial overtones, it appeared that at Collins, tension and isolation have pervaded more into the everyday aspects of the faculty's experience--particularly for the White staff.

C. STUDENTS

Both Collins and DuSable had 100 percent Black student bodies, with poverty rates of 66 and 78 percent respectively. Median family incomes for the two schools' neighborhoods were approximately $12,000 and $8,000, a difference of some importance, though both communities were among the poorest in the city. However, only half of Collins' students were from the school's immediate attendance area. DuSable attracted few students (17 percent) from outside its attendance area while 52 percent of the students at Collins were from outside. Thus, while 14 of the students interviewed at DuSable walked to school, often from just across the street in the 16 story Robert Taylor Homes, 14 of the students interviewed at Collins took the CTA, often involving a transfer, from homes which were more likely to be six-flats or other less densely populated dwellings. Attendance at Collins was approximately 83 percent, compared to 75 percent at DuSable, though classroom observations did not indicate such a high a rate at either school, nor did there appear to be so great a difference between them.

D. DISCIPLINE

While both schools' neighborhoods are heavily affected by gangs, all indications were that the inside of Collins was much freer of their influence than was DuSable. In general, Collins was perceived to be a safer place to go to school (even if not a safer place to walk to). Unlike DuSable, the halls, lunchroom, and bathrooms at Collins were not widely perceived to be dangerous. This may be due, in large part, to the architecture of the school (see below). While the third floor hallway stood out at both schools as the most unruly, its apparent lack of supervision at DuSable was noted as a serious problem. Classroom observation indicated somewhat more order and seriousness in the classes at Collins.

E. ATMOSPHERE

At DuSable, classes were slightly more often disrupted by public announcements, visitors, etc. By comparison, Collins seemed to have the more conducive environment for education. Halls were not as heavily populated during class time, teachers did not keep their doors closed to the outside as much, and again, there was less anxiety expressed about the safety of the interior environment. It should be noted that architecture played an indisputable role in school atmosphere; the noise-damping qualities of Collins' carpeted, warm-colored, visually variegated hallways and classrooms are objectively and inherently calming.

F. PHYSICAL PLANT

Collins, only 10 years old, has unquestionable physical advantages over DuSable, which is completing its 50th year. Collins is a relatively quiet, extremely comfortable and well-equipped facility in excellent repair. However, an apparent shortage of classroom space has been created, due, in part, to the reallocation of classrooms for departmental offices. Open, formerly public areas were now used for classes at times. While DuSable is far from decrepit, the sheer size and impersonality of the structure adds to the difficulties of administering it. But even a casual observer is struck by unfinished plywood repairs over broken classroom door windows and numerous mangled locker doors. The plywooded doors give the school a "prison-like" appearance. The level of observed graffiti and other vandalism was higher at DuSable. Most importantly, given the roughly equal number of security staff at the two schools, those at DuSable have a much tougher job because of the number of doors and expanses of hallway that they, along with the teachers, should be monitoring throughout the school day.

G. STUDENT PROGRESS

Failure rates at Collins were generally lower than at DuSable. This was most graphically seen for students with one or more failures in ninth and eleventh grades over the last three years:

	Ninth Grade			Eleventh Grade		
	1984	1985	1986	1984	1985	1986
Collins	54%	63%	63%	44%	48%	46%
DuSable	81%	79%	74%	54%	58%	57%

The same standardized tests and weekly quiz-test techniques were administered at both schools. Both schools, as part of the Renaissance Program, emphasized basic English and math skills through support classes and learning labs, with the former school now making efforts to further upgrade those activities. But at Collins, the principal articulated higher expectations for the performance of students. Similarly, more teachers interviewed at Collins indicated that they lived in the neighborhood, had a personal commitment to the success of their students, and were involved with their students outside of school.

H. SPECIAL DISCIPLINE, ATTENDANCE, AND DROPOUT PROGRAMS

Since 1980, the attendance rate at Collins has been higher than at DuSable by between 3.5 and 7 percentage points. Both schools had attendance specialty programs focusing on 100 students who seemed to be at risk of dropping out. DuSable's version (called D.A.R.T.) had been in place longer and actually dealt with some 160 students in 1985-86, according to its director (a strong, fatherly, supportive man with counseling experience). The program at Collins had just begun and seemed more involved with monitoring, rather than counseling, students. Both schools had In-School suspension, though Collins made use of Zero Hour to increase the number of students it dealt with and to separate less serious cases from the more serious ones. The Lighted Schoolhouse program at Collins provided after school opportunities to students who could benefit from more time in learning or teacher-led settings.

I. CHANGE

In the last six years, enrollment at both schools has dropped some 20-25 percent. Faculty instability at Collins has had a bad effect on both teacher and student morale. Students' classes have been severely disrupted in some courses in which a succession of teachers had been in the classroom (e.g., the original teacher left, to be replaced by a temporary teacher for 6 weeks until a permanent replacement was assigned; each new teacher must spend up to a month attempting to determine what the students know and what can be taught). Few such complaints were heard at DuSable, where, if anything, lack of change may be a problem. At Collins, the shift from specialist assistant principals (i.e., discipline, counseling, etc.) to floor managers had, led as mentioned above, led to greater accountability and some additional bureaucratic complexity. Staff members had not made final evaluations of this innovation, in place only one semester. Likewise, the teachers at Collins were non-committal on the new principal. DuSable's principal had been in place for nearly ten years.

III. OTHER FACTORS RELEVANT TO DROPOUTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Among the many faculty recommendations offered at the two schools, the following stood out for their economy and earnestness.

Gang membership was widely regarded as a major "cause" of the dropout problem. However, it may more properly be viewed as an alternative form of performance and means of gaining recognition for achievement among economically disadvantaged and educationally unmotivated teenagers. The notion of "performance" with its double meaning helps to explain the unusual amount of spontaneous, disruptive, improvisational behavior on the part of extremely active students in the classes observed. One teacher called this behavior "acting out."

Teachers recognized that the gangs were their main competitors for the hearts and minds of students, and that the gangs had an advantage because they could offer immediate gratification, prestige, glamor, structure, and a familistic sense of belonging. However, many teachers felt that students recognized and appreciated staff who implicitly respected and rewarded student efforts at academic achievement. Thus, the degree of personal connection and support from teachers may be taken as a major factor relevant to the dropout problem. A highly articulate teacher at Collins suggested that the school must enhance efforts which give the individual self-esteem, because school failure is caused by a feeling of being overwhelmed, powerless, and worthless. Therefore, teachers need to present strength, so they won't be taken advantage of, and at the same time show students they care and that success is possible. Personal involvement with such teachers is indispensable for students to succeed.

Students confirmed the importance of teacher involvement. When students were asked to list the traits that define their best teachers, the most prominent were teachers' enjoyableness, friendliness, talkativeness, understanding, and personal support. These appeared 13 times in the DuSable accounts and 11 times at Collins. Subject area knowledge was mentioned only three times at DuSable and twice at Collins. Clarity and taking the trouble to explain the material counted more: eight mentions at DuSable and seven at Collins. One teacher was respected because "He be tripping...he make it fun." Or as a teacher put it, "If you're not concerned, they're not either. 'I did *your* work.' they say." As another teacher put it, it is important to "like them for what they are."

Another factor that teachers at both schools pointed out was the realism of school experiences with respect to the job market. Abstract pedagogical forms (i.e., lectures) and contents (i.e., theory) did not reach the DuSable and Collins students very well unless such orations are extremely well constructed and geared to the understandings of the audience. The most popular, well-attended, and well-behaved classes observed were those with the most practical value: business and vocational courses. However, this is not to downplay the intense seriousness seen in many academic classes nor to ignore the fact that the career-track courses were often for upperclassmen. It is simply a report of what seemed to have the most overall appeal.

Some teachers felt that DuSable's problems stemmed from the fact that about 80 percent of its students come from the Robert Taylor Homes. Several faculty suggested, in desperation, that the projects be torn down because they are "designed for failure," concentrating social problems into such a dense area that no one living there stands much of a chance of avoiding them. Such draconian, large scale proposals for social change were conspicuously absent from teachers' narratives at Collins. On a smaller scale, one teacher suggested that part of the danger and disruption of DuSable's hallways could be blunted if teachers left their classroom doors open. He also suggested that an effort to clear the halls of students who seemed "confused" and were walking around would stabilize things.

More staff development was suggested as a possible antidote to burnout. "You get drained. If you don't recharge, you burn out." Another teacher recommended concentrating on training teachers to teach reading since some 75 percent had no specific education in this fundamental skill in which the students are so deficient. Teachers at both schools suggested installing telephones so that they could reach students who had been cutting.

It was suggested that prospective principals serve internships of a semester or a year under another high school principal rather than spend the crucial first year in a new school absorbed with trying to understand it. This was emphasized in light of the vast differences between administering a high school and an elementary school, from which most secondary school principals are promoted.

For students, successful role models, whether administrators, teachers, visiting alumni, or guest speakers at assemblies, were seen as extremely important, especially for children from unstable families. Clinics like those at DuSable were seen as helping out both emotionally and in terms of the general well-being of students, in addition to the more specific issue of helping to slow the appallingly high birth rate and provide support for those girls already pregnant.

Finally, some teachers strongly recommended flexible and diverse approaches in which they had participated successfully in the past. Several different programs were mentioned, but all shared certain traits: small groups with one-on-one teacher-student relationships, non-regimented classroom environments (sometimes held outside the school building in informal neighborhood settings), and a down-to-earth, practical approach.

CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY AND FINANCE

RESEARCH STUDIES COMPLETED

Budget Cuts at the Board of Education, *a five year look at spending and staffing changes following the 1979 fiscal crisis*, by G. Alfred Hess, Jr. and Anne Carlson Hallett, July 1982 (updated annually). **$4.00**

Class Coverage in the Chicago Public Schools, *a study of teacher absences and substitute coverage at a sample of schools in the city*, by Hannah Meara, Marilou Fallis and Anne Carlson Hallett, June 1983. **$3.00**

Teacher Transfers and Classroom Disruption, *a study of teacher reassignment practices and resulting classroom disruption in the Chicago Public Schools between 1980 and 1983*, by G. Alfred Hess, Jr. and Hannah Meara, January 1984. **$3.00**

Revenue Short Falls at the Chicago Board of Education: 1970-1984, *a 15-year analysis of revenue trends, adjusted for enrollment changes and inflation, containing comparisons with other Illinois districts and other major urban school systems*, by James L. Greer and G. Alfred Hess, Jr. June 1984 (updated annually). **$3.00**

Recreational Programs in a Time of Fiscal Constraint, *an analysis of programs supported by the Playground Fund Tax Rate*, by G. Alfred Hess, Jr. and Michael E. Davidson, January 1985. **$2.00**

Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools, *an analysis of Dropout Rates for the high school Classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984, by individual schools, based on 100,000 student records*, by G. Alfred Hess, Jr. and Diana Lauber, April 1985. **$3.00**

What Are We Willing to Pay for School Reform?, *an analysis of the full range of educational reform measures proposed for Illinois in 1985*, by F. Howard Nelson and G. Alfred Hess, Jr., May 1985. **$7.00**

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